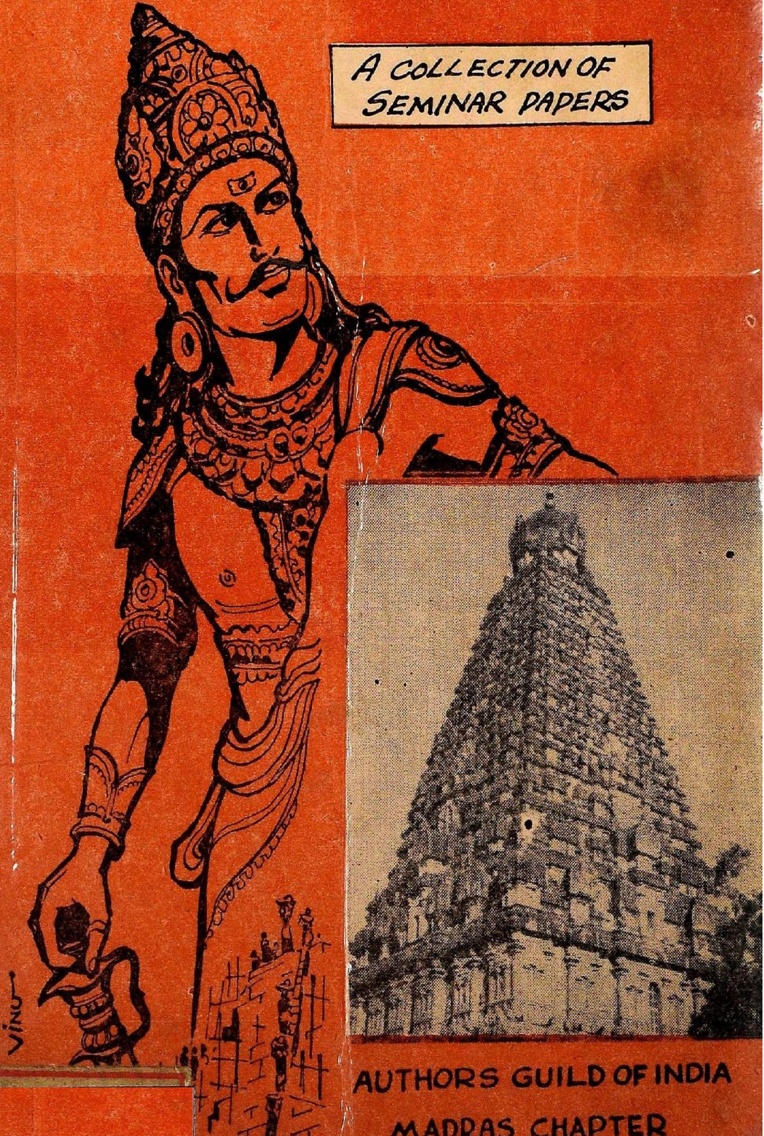
RAJA RAJA CHOLA

The High Point of History

A COLLECTION OF SEMINAR PAPERS



AUTHORS GUILD OF INDIA
MADRAS CHAPTER

RAJA RAJA CHOLA

The High point of History

A Collection of Two Seminar papers

S. V. S

Convener

Authors Guild of India Madras Chapter
Bhavan's Rajaji Centenary Library
36, Venkatanarayana Road
T. Nagar, Madras-600 017.

Copies can be had from
S. Venkatasubramaniyam (S.V.S.)
Convener
Authors Guild of India
Madras Chapter
2-B, West Road, West C. I. T. Nagar.
Madras-600 035.

President : D. R. MANKEAR

Vice-Presideut : M. A. WAHAB

Secretary General : RAJENDRA AWASTHY

Chapter Conveners : D. ANJANEYULU
S. VENKATASUBRAMANIYAM (SVS)

Chapter Treasurer : GOMATHI SWAMiNATHAN

Executive Committee :

C, Subramaniam
A. V. Subramanian
Naa. Parthasarathy
Dr. N. Sundaram
A. Ranganathan
Smt. Jyotirlata Girija
G. Rajavelu
Narana. Dureikgannan
B. V. Srinivsacharyalu
T. V. S. Mani
Smt. Vasumathi Ramaswamy
Manavai Mustafa

Price Rs. 30

Preface

This book contains papers of two seminars one held at Lucknow and the other at Madras.

Last year on 15th April 1984, Madras Chapter of the Authors Guild of India held a seminar on Historical Fiction at Madras. Later at the 11th convention of AGI held at Lucknow in March 1985, Madras Chapter conducted a seminar on Raja Raja Chola, the Great king of Tamil Nadu of the 10th century A. D

Both these seminars left a deep impression in large number of educated public of North as well as South Indie: The National press of North India like "Times of India", "The Pioneer", "Nava Bharat, Times" (Hindi) and many others gave a good coverage for the seminar on Raja Raja Chola. Not only that a number of members who attended this seminar evinced great interest in the papers but also asked for the copies. This enthused the Madras chapter to bring out this book. This will give to the readers a glimpse of the multifaceted personality - Raja Raja Chola.

The other seminar held at Madras on "Historical Fiction" discussed about the influence of historical fiction on society, its literary merit, how it should be dealt in the present national context and similar problems.

Inaugurating the seminar Sri C. Subramaniam said: "Years back in 1948 or 50 Rajaji who was present at the Congress session held at Hyderabad warned the people of India to seek the reorganisation of states on linguistic basis was nothing short of tribal instinct. At that time even I could not understand him. I was all for linguistic division. Now when we see what is happening in Punjab and Assam we realise the truth of his words. So also the authors who are writing historical fiction glorifying great deeds of the kings of their linguistic area should not give room for disintegration".

There is much talk on national Integration. AGI is one organisation which fosters this noble ideal without much prentension. If you want real national integration, the minds of North and South, East and West should integrate first. The phenomenal sucess of the seminar on Bharathi at the National Convention of AGI at Delhi under the Chairmanship of Sri C. Subramaniam, (former Central Minister) in the year 1982

and the seminar on Raja Raja Chola held at Lucknow convention in March 1985 left in the minds of Authors of South India a deep impression of how eager the North Indian authors are to know about South India. So also the seminar held on Bharathendu and Shuklaji left a deep impression among the North Indian authors what great interest members of the Madras, Chapter evince. Hope in the years to come more and more understanding among the intellectual class will be nourished.

We are presenting this book with great hope that North India will receive with great warmth.

Here I must mention a word about our State Minister for Information and Tourism Sri. R. M. Veerappan. He has always supported any scheme Madras chapter of AGI took to him both in the capacity of Minister and in his personal capacity.

So also our Education Minister Sri. Aranganayakam always stood by us.

Special mention should be made of our Sri. S. Narayana swamy and Rajaji Trust for their spontaneous donation when we organised first Seminar on "Historical Fiction".

Sri. N. V. S. Manian lover of Tamil Literature and patron of good causes helped a great deal in making the seminar on Historical fiction a success.

I am grateful to my friend Sri N. Subramanian for going through the proofs.

I must also thank Artist, 'Vinu' for the excellent cover page he designed. His portrayal Raja Raja Chola is a traditional conception of a South Indian king.

I must also thank Aarthi Printing House the nice job they have done in executing the printing of this book.

S. V. S.
(Convener)

Contents

1) Raja Raja-The Great	Dr. K. D. Thirunavukkarasu	
2) The Administrative Acumen of Rajaraja. ...	Naa. Parthasarathy	15
3) Popular Government	Manavai Mustafa	20
4) The Relavance of Raja Raja chola to Indian Art History-Some Aesthetic consideration ...	A. Ranganathan	25
5) Raja Raja Chola in Kanyakumari ...	Dr. S. Padmanabhan	32
6) Raja Raja Chola and the Bhakti Movement of Tamilnadu ...	Pe. Su. Mani	37
7) mpact of Raja Raja on ontemporary writers ...	A. V. Subramanian	48
8) Stage and Screen plays on Raja Raja The Great ...	Puthaneri Subramanian	54

Seminar on Historical Fiction

9) Historical Fiction	Dr. S. Thiruvenkatachari	59
10) Is it Literature?	Sandilyan	68
11) KannadigaraKarmakathae A Historical Novel ...	Prof. K. KushalppaGowda	72
12) The Historical Novel	Prof. P.S. Sundaram	78
13) Historical Fiction in Telugu	B.V. Srinivasacharyulu	84
14) முன்ஷி கல்கி கண்ட நாட்டியக்கலை ...	டாக்டர் கலா கே. தாக்கர்	90
15) இந்தி இலக்கியத்தில் சரித்திர நாவல்கள் ...	ர. செளரிராஜன்	100
16) ராஜ ராஜ சோழன் ('ஹிந்தி கட்டுரை') ...	ர. செளரிராஜன்	அநுபந்தம்

RAJA RAJA CHOLA

Raja Raja the Chola
Was a mighty king, they say;
He lived nine hundred years ago
And held extensive sway.

No one can tell whether he was tall,
Or medium height or short;
Dark, brown or fair; fat, plump or lean;
Could ride a horse or not.

Did the mighty king have a moustache ?
Or was his upper lip bare?
Not a partyman, painter or sculptor
I frankly couldn't less care !

But he left a splendid monument,
A temple towering high—
Though a little over two hundred feet
It seems to touch the sky.

I think it is the faith and devotion
That inspired flesh and bones
Which has made of this sky-high tower
Something more than a heap of stones!

He left behind him too
A tradition held most dear
Of piety, worship, song and dance
Which go on from year to year.

The Chola king was great—
But what he left behind
Is greater to the simple folk
Not made by learning blind

Prof. P. S. SUNDARAM

Keynote paper.

RAJARAJA - THE GREAT

(985 A.D. —1014 A. D.)

-**Dr. K. D. Thirunavukkarasu**
International Institute of Tamil/Studies
MADRAS-113.

The Imperial Cholas were famous as conquering heroes, as champions and promoters of Tamil Culture, especially the Tamil literature, Saivite religion and temple architecture. They gave a new fillip to the polity in which the village assemblies were encouraged to play a prominent role in India. The Cholas strengthened their supremacy by administering the vast territory with an efficient bureaucracy. For a short period, they extended the extent of their empire upto the South East Asian countries and such an empire was established on the strength of a navy, which was an unusual feature of Indian Military tradition.

Dr. Romila Thapar points out the reasons for the emergence of South India as a custodian and promoter of Hindu culture in the following words. "The ascendancy of the South was due not solely to the power of the Cholas but also to the fact this period saw the crystallization of Tamil Culture. In whatever sphere, whether of social institutions, religion or the fine arts, the standards established during this period were regarded as Classical." 1

---

1. Romila Thapar, A History of India, Vol. I; P. 194.

The accession of Rajaraja I, the son of Parantaka II (Sundara Chola) in 985 A. D. marks the beginning of the most brilliant period in the history of South India. Rajakesari Arulmozhi Varman as he was known in the early years ot his reign, came to the throne, after a long apprenticeship of yuvaraja, in the month of July, 985 A. D.

With the accession of the Rajaraja, the Great, we enter upon a century of grandeur and glory for the dynasty of the Cholas. The personal ability of Rajaraja in some respects seems to be the greatest of all great Chola emperors of the Vijayalaya line. He laid the foundation for the splendid achievements of his son and successor Rajendra I, under whom the empire attained its greatest extent and carried its arms beyond the seas.

Man of Many-facets

The twenty-nine years (985 A. D. - 1014 A. D.) of Rajaraja's reign constitute the formative period in the history of the Chola monarchy. In the organisation of Civil Service and the army, in art and architecture, in religion and literature, we see the work of powerful force, newly liberated by the progressive imperialism of the times. A relatively small state, at his accession that has hardly recovered from the disasters of the Rashtrakuta invasion, by the end of Rajaraja's rule, the Chola Kingdom had become an extensive and well-knit empire. It was efficiently organised and administered, which was rich in resources. The empire was guarded by powerful army and well trained navy.

More powerful than the work of this great monarch, must have been his personality. No contemporary records are available to understand and appreciate the greatness of his conduct and character.

The affection he lavished on his elder sister Kundavai, after whom he named one of his daughters and the privileged position accorded to his grand-aunt Sembiyan Mahadevi, the mother of Uttama Chola indicate that he was a far-sighted ruler.

Military Exploits

Very early in his reign, Rajaraja assumed his title "Mummudi Chola Deva", i. e., the Lord who have crowned with three crowns (Chola, Chera and Pandya realms), one who destroyed the fleet of the Cheras at Canthalur.

Almost, the first military achievement of his reign, was the campaign in Kerala country The result was summed up in the Meykirtti (Prasasti), as "Kanthalur Salai Kalamaruthu" i. e. one who destroyed the fleet at Kanthalur which preceedes the name of the King, in several of his inscriptions. Though this title appears from the 4th year of his reign, no inscription of Rajaraja has found in the Kerala and Pandya countries bearing a date earlier than the 8th regnal year. Some years of fighting were apparently necessary before the conquest could be completed and the conquered country become sufficiently settled for his administration with proper organisation.

Southern Campaigns

The Thiruvalangadu plates and the first meykirti (Prasasti) seem to suggest that the capture of Madurai and its subjection of the Pandya King Amarabujanga, precedes the advance and storming of the strong fortress of Vizhinam and destroying the fleet at Salai. This expedition resulted in breaking the naval power of the Cheras. It is clear from his inscriptions that Rajaraja undertook more than one expedition against the Pandya and his ally, the Chera. One of them seems to have been directed against Kollam. The campaign in which Rajaraja claims to have conquered the Chera Nadu and the Pandyas in the Malai Nadu (hilly region) was quite obviously different from and later than that in which Kanthalur and Vizhinam were attacked.

The chief event of this expedition which took place sometime before the year 1008 A. D., was apparently the storming and capture of the strong fortress Udagai, in Malainadu, which may be identified with Coorg.

Conquest of Sri Lanka

The Izham (the northern part of Sri Lanka) has been included among the conquests of Rajaraja, says the first meykkirtti, beginning with the phrase "Thirumagal". The King is said to have taken Izha mandalam, owned by the fierce singhalese. Then it has been included into the Chola empire. In his 29th regnal year (1014 A. D.), Rajaraja made a grant of several villages in Sri Lanka, for various purposes to the celebrated temple at Thanjavur.

The naval expedition of Rajaraja against Sri Lanka, must have taken place in the reign of Mahinda V, who came to the throne in 981 A. D., and was still ruling Lanka at the time of Rajaraja's invasion. The Chola king had driven Mahinda into the forest and made himself the lord of the most of the Northern Sri Lanka, which became a province of Chola empire under the name of 'Mummudi Chola Mandalam'.

From his inscriptions, it is probable that Rajaraja signalled the Chola occupation of Sri Lanka by the construction of a stone temple to Siva at Polanaruva.

Conquest of Kongu Mandalam

Turning his conquests in other directions, Gangapadi, Nulambapadi and Thadigaipadi, all of them in the Karnataka State, have been annexed to the Chola Kingdom in the reign of Rajaraja. The campaign against Nulambapadi and Gangapadi was no doubt facilitated by their previous occupation of Kongu country, i. e., the modern Salem and Coimbatore districts of Tamilnadu.

Cenquest of Rattapadi

Inscriptions of Rajaraja's reign reveal that he fought a successful war against Satyasria the Western Chalukya King and captured some of his treasuries, part of which went to the enrichment of the great temple at Thanjavur. The Western Chalukyas were also hardpressed in the North by the hostility of the Paramaras of Malwa and must have found it hard to sustain against the two powerful enemies attacking them from opposite directions.

The inscriptions of Rajaraja from 1003 A. D. assert that he captured the Rattapadi. The campaigns in the north-west resulted in the annexation of most of the territories that had ever been held by Gangas, Nulambas and nearly the whole region of the modern district of Bellary. These campaigns in the North, North Western regions of Chola Kingdom ensured the river Tungabhadra as the northern boundary of the Chola empire.

Vengi Affairs

Rajaraja's intercession in tha Eastern Chalukyan country was direct and a result of the political development of the early years of his reign, rather than of any diplomatic design to dis-associate the Eastern Chalukyas from the control of the Western Chalukyan cousins. If Rajaraja and his successor found it easier to extend their supremacy over the east-coast across the Tungabhadra, it was partly due to the different conditions in which the Eastern and Western Chalukyas found themselves. The Chola emperor gave his daughter Kundavai in marriage to Vimaladithya, the prince of Vengi and thus brought Vengi in a close connection with the Cholas.

The marriage alliance of the Cholas with the Eastern Chalukyas infused new blood to the Vengi royal family and it became the source of strength to this declining dynasty which survived for nearly a century more.

Conquest of Maldives

The last of the conquests mentioned in the inscriptions of the 29th regnal year of Rajaraja, is that of "the old islands of the sea numbering twelve thousands".

i. e., Maldives. This naval conquest of which, we have no details, but there is sufficient indication that the navy was well established under this great ruler.

K. M. Panikkar's observation deserves special mention here. He says that "in the period of Chola greatness, South India looked across the sea for its political activities. A hundred years of overseas expansion and naval warfare by

the Cholas are striking features of South Indian History, which has no parallel even in the imperial traditions of North India." 2

The military exploits of Rajaraja enabled him to establish a well-knit empire from the banks of Tungabhadra to Rohana (Modern Kandy) in Sri LanKa. In order to establish his supremacy over South India, he fought against 37 kings and princes of 26 royal families that ruled the territories which have been subdued and annexed by this great warrior. Hence, he has acclaimed himself as 'Rajaraja' i. e. KIng of Kings.

The Chola Meykkirtti

Rajaraja was the first Tamil King who conceived the idea of formulating in set phrases an official record of the chief events of his reign. This Meykkirtti has served as an introduction to his stone inscriptions. The main difference between the 'Prasasti' of non-Tamil Kings and Meykkirtti of the Cholas is to be mentioned here. In the Meykkirtti, the puranic or the legendary preface which is the significant aspect of Prasasti would not find a place. Besides, this, the heroic exploits of the kings are narrated in a chronological order. As the regnal years of the king advances, the length of the Meykkirtti will also increase in its size.

The Meykkirtti of Rajaraja begins with the phrase "Tirumakal polap perunilacelviyum" (Like Lakshmi and Buma devi), that records the important events of his reign. This type of maintaining a record of achievements was followed by every one of his successors who adorned the Chola throne.

2. Administration

Rajaraja was not only a great soldier and general, but also a sound administrator. His title to fame in this respect rests on the accurate land survey and assessment of the country for the purpose of land revenue.

---

2. K. M. Panikkar, Geographicai Factors in Indian History pp. 42-43.

Survey of Lands

The revenue survey began in the year A. D. 1991, formed one of the most original and important administrative achievements of the reign and furnished the basis for the revenue policy for many years.

In this context, it will be appropriate to quote the observations of Dr. S. Krishnaswamy Aiyengar :

> "We learn that the land under cultivation were carefully surveyed and holdings registered at least a century before the famous Domesday (1086 A. D.) of William, the Conqueror. The inscriptions of Rajaraja refers occasionally to the book (i. e. revenue register record) show that the survey was correct to $\frac{1}{52,428,800,000}$ of a veli of land which would approximately equivalent to $\frac{1}{50,000}$ of a sq. inch." 3

Secretariat

Rajaraja created a strong and centralised bureaucratic machinery, similar to the 'secretariat' in modern governments that looks after the day to day administration of the country. He appointed higher officials as representatives of the Central Governm nt in suitable localities such as the district head-quarters.

Audit Bureau

He also introduced a system of audit bureau to check and streamline the affairs of the village assemblies (Sabhas and Urs) and Municipal councils (Nagar and councils of Nadus). These were the quasi-public corporations and they were asked to produce their accounts and records for audit without curtailing their initiative for autonomy.

Village Administration

The administrative unit of the Chola Empire was the village and to that extent there was significant difference between

3. Hindu Administrative Institutions in South India, P. 141.

Chola administration and that of the Guptas. However, the nature of village administration was certainly of a very different order. The Degree of autonomy at village level was something quite remarkable for the times. Chola officials participated in village affairs more as advisers and observers than as administrators.

"This permitted a certain continuity in local growth and development without too much interference from political changes at the upper level and may in part amount for the general cultural continuity which is among the more noticeable features of the Tamil region as compared with the other parts of the sub-continent." 4

Standing Army

Rajaraja established a powerful standing army and a considerable navy which have achieved even greater success under Rajendra, earned him the name as the greatest among the empire builders of South India.

Irrigation works

The Cholas, however, were not merely builders of magnificent temples, Their claim to greatness is also based on their schemes that were executed for the public utility. Great works of irrigation were executed for the public utility. Great works of irrigation were undertaken by successive KIngs which made the Kaveri delta, a granary of the empire. The Chola monarchs conceived the idea of controlling the river Kaveri at the head of its delta. The grand anaicut (Dam), stands as a magnificent. marvel of the engineering skill of the Cholas, This great dam was erected at the head of the Kaveri delta, where the river has been split into two, namely Kaveri and Kolladam.

The branches of the Kaveri river which bear the names Mudikondan, Kirttimarthandan, Cholasulamani and Uyakkondan which irrigate thousands of hectares of lands owe their origin to Rajaraja, the Great, The names of the various canals reveal that they were the surnames of Rajaraja.

---

4. Romila Thapar, A History of India, Vol. I ; pp. 209-201.

3. Religious Policy

Deva-Raja Cult

Several temples of the period, and often also the chief icons in them, were called after the ruling kings who established them. The worship accorded to idols called sometimes after the living monarchs seems to have been connected with the apotheosis of royal personages after their demise. The prevalence of this custom in the Chola country gradually blossomed into the cult of Devaraja, which is attested by inscriptions that mention the construction of sepulchral temples over the remains of kings and princes.

Burton Stein states that " a royal Siva cult was began by Rajaraja Chola I and was continued by his son and successor Rajendra I. Later Cholas appear not to have maintained this institution. The cult combined the conspicuous worship of Vedic gods in forms and the 'God-King' cult as found in Khmer (Cambodia) country". 5

Religious Policy

Himself an ardent follower of Siva, Rajaraja like all the great statesmen of India, was tolerant in matters of religion. He patronised all the creeds with equal favour. The decorative sculptures on the walls of Thanjavur temple and the construction of a Vishnu temple by him at Karnataka, and his numerous gifts to other Vishnu temples that were recorded in his inscriptions are unfailing examples of his liberal religious policy.

The celebrated Leyden Grant records how he encouraged erection of the Chudamani Vihara at Nagappattinam by the Sailendra King Sri Mara Vijayatunga Varman, the Lord of Sri Vijaya and Kataha (Empire of Java, Sumatra and Malaysia) across the sea. This Vihara which was built in the 21st year of Rajaraja, was dedicated to Lord Buddha. Rajaraja's son Rajendra confirmed the grant of village Anaimangalam after

---

5. Burton Stein, 'The Segmentary State in South Indian History' in **Realm and Region in Traditional India,** P. 24.

his father's death and caused it to be engraved on the copper plates. Thus, the cathclicity of the Emperor has been revealed by his encouragements, endowments and grants made to the various creeds of the country.

Champion of Saivism

Another greatest achievement of Rajaraja was the redeeming of the palm-leaves of Tevaram, the Saivite hymns from the limbo of oblivion and its codification. With the help of Nambi Andar Nambi, a Saivite Saint of Chola country, Rajaraja was able to spot out the exact place where Tevaram Trio had left their manuscripts.

The spontaneous outpourings of Saivite saints Tirugnanasambandar, Tirunavukkaracar and Sundaramurthi are called Tevaram. The term Tevaram implies a 'Garland of Devotional Songs'. The saint composers of Tevaram hymns lived in seventh and eighth centuries A. D.

After redeeming those manuscripts, Rajaraja wanted to systematise them in a chronological order. He sought the help of Nambi Andar Nambi, the great scholar and a saiva devotee of his times. This devotee classified the extent hymns of Tevaram into seven canons and codified them in accordance with the available biographical traditions of the Tevaram Trio. Rajaraja thus made them a property of the people.

Tevaram serves as a source of Inspiration and solace to the yearning hearts of the Tamil people. It has been acclaimed as 'Tamil Marai' (the Veda in Tamil) by the sages and seers of Saiva faith in Tamilnadu. He endowed a number of grants to recite the Tevaram hymns at Thanjavur temple during the performance of daily worships. 'Sivapathasekara' is one his surnames. The term implies 'one who has adorned Lord Siva's feet as his crown'. From this title one can understand the devotion of Rajaraja to the Supreme Being of his religious creed.

The Great Temple at Thanjavur

Rajaraja's colourful achievements in several spheres of human endeavour has been commemorated by the magnificent Siva temple, which he built at Thanjavur. It has been called after his name as Rajarajeswaram which is popularly known as Brihadisvara temple. It has been considered as "the finest monument of a splendid period of South Indian history and the most beautiful specimen of Tamil architecture at its best."

The temple is remarkable alike for its stupenduous proportions and for the simplicity of its design.

Connoisseur of Arts

Rajaraja had a great fascination for the Fine Arts. He was a patron of Arts and Letters. He spared no pains to admire the artistes and appreciate their artistic talents. He showered presents and grants of land to the musicians and danseues.

Special attention was given to the promotion of painting by this emperor. The paintings in the walls of sanctum sanctorum of the Great Temple at Thanjavur appear to have reached a high water-mark in this period.

He brought together the various Fine Arts into a well-knit unit. He made them thrive in the precincts of the temples by inumerable grants.

Nityavinodha, one of his titles reveals that he was an ardent lover and connoisseur of arts.

Rajaraja's Envoy at the Court of the Chinese Emperor

The naval activity of this great chola king was not, however [illegible]nfined within the limits of the Bay of Bengal. He ap[illegible] to have had commercial contacts with the Farther-east as far as China.

"The Account of Chola" in "The History of the Sung Dynasty" gives a graphic picture about the envoy sent by Rajaraja. The Chinese annals refer to Rajaraja as Lo-Cho-Lo-Cho.

Under the stewardship of Soli Samudra (Chola Samudra). envoys have visited the court of the emperor of China in 1015 A. D.

The embassy led by Soli Samudra consisted of 52 members; they brought with them a great deal of pearls, the precious gems, gums, spices and medicinal herbs. Their mission, it seems, was two-fold, diplomatic as well as commercial.

Soli Samudra and his company spent only a year or so in China. Their official mission was to pay tribute to the Emperor Chen Chung. They participated in the birthday celebrations of the Chinese Emperor with great enthusiasm,

On their way back to India, Soli Samudra, the leader of the envoy died at Canton on the 18th day of January 1016 A. D. When this news reached the Chinese emperor, he was taken aback. Then he ordered one of his ministers to go over there and to make arrangements for the funeral of Soli Samudra with the honour of the State. 6

We are able to get this information only from the Chinese sources. Nothing is known about Soli Samudra in Tamilnadu.

Other Aspects of Rajaraja's Greatness

"If names are the music of history, this noble king greatly indulged his taste for this music". He used to confer on himself a number of titles to commemorate his various achievements.

He was the first king of South India, to introduce a record of his achievements in his inscriptions and thus made them to bear ample testimony to some of the important events of his reign.

Rajaraja was one of the great rulers of India and his reign of 29 years herelded a new era of peace and prosperity in the history of Tamilnadu.

---

6. The Colas, P. 183.

His splendid success in the various fields of royal activity enabled his greater son to score off more success. Prof. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri compares Rajaraja with the Greek King Philip. He says that "Rajaraja stands in many ways in the same relation to Rajendra as Philip of Macedon to Alexander, the Great."

Rajaraja had a clear vision and vigour in implementing his plans and projects. As a master-mind of his age, he gave a new orientation to the worn out administrative machinery and infused a new blood to meet the challenges. His greatness lies in the innovations that he had made, in his originality of approach in accomplishing the up-hill tasks and a sense of imagination, which had endowed him with a foresight and an insight, to play his role successfully in the political arena of South India.

Besides these significant features, Rajaraja had a kind of democratic spirit. He used to call himself as Jananatha, the Lord of the common man. This spirit appears to have radiated throughout his life, which enhanced the greatness of Rajaraja, as a noble and benevolent ruler.

"The Chola political system was the only one which still maintained contact with the cultivator on a wider scale and retained this characteristics of a centrally organised administration" observes Dr. Romila Thapar and concludes that "the political status of Rajaraja-I was certainly different from that of Amogavarsha, the Rashtrakuta ruler, or Vishnuvardhana, the Hoysala". 7

A modest attempt is made in this paper to present the multi-dimensional character and personality of the illustrious ruler of South-India.

---

7. Romila Thapar, A History of India, Vol I P. 200

Before concluding my observations, I wish to quote the tributes paid by Dr. R. C. Majumdar to Rajaraja, about five decades ago.

"Rajaraja was one of the greatest rulers of South India, and fully deserved the title 'the GREAT', that is usually applied to him. He was a great conqueror and laid the foundation of the mighty Chola Empire. He also made excellent arrangements for the administration of the vast dominions." 8

8. R. C. Majumdar, Ancient India. P. 406.

Kiurlapathi K. M. Munshi on

RAJA RAJA CHOLA

"When North India was being raided by Mahmud, Raja Raja Chola one of the greatest rulers in Indian history, was laying the foundation of an empire. A pious man, he conquered far and wide, set up an efficient administration and ruled his people wisely and well. A great patron of art and literature he built the Brahadeeswara (Rajarajeswara) temple at Tanjore, the most beautiful of Tamil edifices in the country. His empire at his death included the whole of South India upto the Tungabadra, the Maldives and a part of Ceylon with Andhradesa in feudatory alliance".

Presidential address

THE ADMINISTRATIVE ACUMEN OF RAJA RAJA

Naa. Parthasarathy

In the deafening din and bustle of modern living, those who spare time and mind to delve into the past that built the edifice for the present deserve all praise. Hence my compliments to you all for evincing an excaptional interest in one of the eminent rulers of the erstwhile Chola kingdom of the South, Raja Raja the Great. I consider it a cherished privilege to have been called upon to assocate myself with the proceedings here today. Hail the Great King, Raja Raja Chola!

Persons like me, schooled in traditional Tamil institutions and used to take fancy jaunts into the glorious past of our people as men of letters, especially those like me writing historical novels have been impressed quite a lot by rulers like Raja Raja who present a refreshing contrast to the rulers of the day. To be candid, even as our democracy is not a democracy in the real sense the Chola imperialism was not imperialism at all in the contemptuous connotation as of now..

Anyone associated with the canons of Indian History, especially of the South, cannot afford to forget the Chola dynasty and its star performer Raja Raja Chola the Great. Testifying to his greatness stands as a towering monument the Big Temple (the temple of Lord Siva known as the Brahadeeswara Temple) in Thanjavur. Even alien experts in structural engineering have proclaimed it as an architectural marvel. Even so the builder is hailed as a marvel in political administration,

Efficiently organised

Raja Raja crowned in 985 AD upon the death of Uthama Chola was earlier known as Arulmozhivarman. And he amply proved his royal title Raja Raja, King of Kings. As the noted historian Sri K. A. Nilakanta Sastri puts it, the real greatness of Chola empire dates from the accession of Arulmozhivarman. The 30 years of his rule constitute the formative period of Chola imperialism. A relatively small state at his accession, hardly recovering from the effects of Rashtrakutya invasion, the Chola Kingdom grew under him into an extensive and well-knit empire efficiently organised and administered, rich in resources and possessed of a powerful standing army and navy, well-trained and equal to the greatest enterprises.

Secular out look

And what is all the more surprising is that the war-torn days that preceded and continued during the reign of Raja Raja did not tell upon the economy. But, our experience today has been quite contrary; we have a separate war- affected budget these days. Wars shatter the economy not only of the countries that are actually warring, but also those having trade ties with them. But Raja Raja has the singular distinction of adding to his territorial jurisdiction, constantly defending the kingdom from invasion and also establishing trade ties with foreign countries not within easy reach in those days of transport constraints. At a time when religious animosity was at its height, causing feuds everywhere, Raja Raja, an avowed Saivite, not only built a big Siva temple but also funded the construction of a Buddha Vihar at Nagapattinam in his kingdom and had a muslim on his retinue, which speak voumes of his secular disposition as a ruler.

Administration

Even in regard to internal affairs, Raja Raja maintained contact with the cultivator on a wide scale, and retained characteristics of a centrally organised administration. The political status of Raja Raja was decidedly distinct from that of his contemporaries.

Shall we hear the celebrated contemporary historian Romila Thapar ; "Administration was carried on by a well-integrated body of officials. The system of recruitment is not described, but presumably it did not differ in essentials from the modern system. Selection was based on a judicious balance of birth, caste, connections and qualifications. Orders were issued by the king orally in the first instance and were later recorded. and in the case of a contract were attested by a series of officers. The Chola kingdom was divided into provinces (Mandalam); there were generally eight or nine of these. Each mandalam was divided into Valanadus or districts. These in turn were subdivided into groups of villages, variously called kotram, nadu or kottam. Occasionally a very large village was administered as a single unit and this was called a "Thaniyur."

Villages did enjoy a remarkable autonomy. Chola officials participated in village affairs more as advisers and observers than as administrators. This permitted a certain continuity in local growth and development without too much interference from political changes at the upper level and may in part account for the general cultural continuity which is among the more noticeable features of the Tamil region as compared with other parts of the sub-continent.

Decentralisation

As of the so-called recent concept of decentralisation and local autonomy, or to put it in the modern managerial jargon, participative Management, Raja Raja considered that each village should be administered by the villagers themselves. Therefore the authority to administer the village was vested in this assembly. In the larger villages, where rural organisation was more complex, there was a variety of assemblies and a villager could be a member of two or two or more, depending upon the requirements. A village was divided into wards and each ward could call an assembly of its members, some of whom might also be representatives of professional groups, such as carpenters, smiths and others. There were also committees to look into the affairs of temples.

Apart from small councils, there were also general assemblies accommodating local residents. It was considered to be a very ingenious system. The general assembly consists of three categories : Ur, consisting of tax-paying residents of an ordinary village; the sabha was restricted to the Brahmins of the villages or else was found exclusively in villages gifted to Brahmins and finally nagaram was found more commonly in trade centres, catering to mercantile interests. Very large villages had two Urs.

The working of these assemblies differed according to local conditions. The Ur was open to all male adults of the village; but as of present day set-up old men dominated there. There was also an informal subcommittee to go into the routine chores.

Elections

The most democratic aspect was the way in which elections were held for local bodies. Called KUDA OLAI MURAI, the system was choice by casting lots from among the aspirants for memberships. There are inscriptional evidences for the details relating to Sabha. Kudam is the Tamil equivalant for pot. Chits bearing the names ųf cantestants would be put inside the put and required number of chits would be picked up to form the concerned committee.

Clean Government

Honesty was expected and insisted in the maintenance of village accounts. Any person chosen to the office of writing public accounts was first asked to give his own accounts of assets and liabilities to the council of elders. He should be declared honest before he takes up assignment as accountant. Not only that, even relatives of those seeking public offices of administration were asked to submit their accounts to be eligible to contest the election. The list of those relatives included even in-laws. How relevant it is even now, at least as a matter of wishful thinking!

Assembly

The activities of the assembly included the keeping of records particularly those pertaining to charities and taxes. The assembly also settled agrarian disputes. The larger assemblies kept a small staff of paid officers, but most of the work was done on a voluntary basis. Land tax was generally assesed at one third of the produce, which, we as well can agree with Romila Thapar, was high by any standards. But in exceptional cases remission or commutation was permitted by the king.

The non-taxable land consisted of the residential area, temples, tanks, irrigation channels and areas where artisans and low income group population lived.

What goes to the credit of the versatile personality was the calibre of Raja Raja with which he could manage various democratic local bodies, feudatory lords and still assert his supremacy; could wage battles with neighbouring kingdoms and yet keep the royal economy stabilised; and above all could also engage in overseas trade. Foreign trade provided an additional incentive to an already developing local market.

Considering the various aspects in which Raja Raja distinguished himself, one wonders whether this was possible for an individual to conduct himself in such a superb way. But we have records for all anecdotes and details of his administration To sum up, I would say, Raja Raja exemplified his name in letter and spirit by proving himself to be a king of kings. Those who are sick with the happening of autocratic outbursts of our so-called democratic barons, may as well wish for a revival of the days of Raja Raja who was a benevolent democratic royal figure.

POPULAR GOVERNMENT UNDER THE RAJA RAJA CHOLA

Manavai Mustafa

The form of government of the Chola Empire between 850 and 1270 A. D. was as in the ancient Sangam age, monarchy. But there was a vast difference between the primitive chieftaincy of the earlier time and the almost Byzantian royalty of Rajaraja I and his successors. In the Sangam polity the king was all powerful. Yet there were certain checks, at least in theory, which influenced his decisions and actions. These checks were traditions, conventions of society and the injunction of rules of right conduct ('Aranul'). They were not the same as constitutional checks. The sangam Tamils, perhaps, willingly accepted monarchy as the best form of Government. Though the monarch was an absolute and full sovereign and there was no authority co-eval with royal authority, his power over his subjects was regarded as paternal. That is why he was called 'Irai', which means God, the father of all creation and the subjects were called 'Makkal' meaning children. This political philosophy of the Sangam Tamils regarding paternal Government as best illustrated by Thiruvalluvar in his immortal 'Kural' coupled with physical factors like enormous distances, lack of quick communication and absence of an organised bureaucratic machinery of government in the modern sense, led to decentralisation or a large measure of self-government that

prevailed in the rural areas throughout the kingdom. The villagers managed their affair through their assemblies called 'Manram', ' 'Poduyil', (பொது இல்) 'ambalam' and 'avai'. These folk gatherings later blossomed into the highly developed system of village government which functioned admirably in Rajaraja Chola time.

In the Government at the capital there was no Council of Ministers as in the modern times. But the Sangam Kings were helped by two institutions, 'Aimperum Kulu' (ஐம்பெருங் குழு) or Council of five and 'Enperayam' (எண்பேராயம்) or Board of Eight, referred to in Sangam texts like 'Silappadikaram', 'Manimekalai', 'Maduraikkanchi' and in some post-sangam texts like 'Perungadai'. 'Aimperunkulu' consisted of the Chief Priest, the army Chief, the Ambassador, the spies and the Ministers. The 'Enperayam' was composed of the Accountants, Executives Officials, treasury officials, Palace Guards, Leading Men in the capital city, Chiefs of infantry, Chiefs of Elephantry and Chiefs of the Cavalry. These officials who advised the King, had no collective status but only individual responsibility to the King. Besides these institutions, there were individual Ministers, known as 'Amaichar'. Their duties were advisory.

Though in Sangam. Polity the form of Government was monarchy, the King was not considered as an absolute autocrat. There were many checks on his power. The advisors who were in his court raised a note of warning or protest, when he deviated from the path of justice.

Between the 9th and 13th Centuries under the Imperial Cholas the empire had become extensive. Under Rajaraja I the monarchy underwent a transformation, the King became an 'Emperor'. A powerful bureaucracy evolved to assist the king. There was no legislature in the modern sense of the term. In those days no government of an Indian State had a legislature proper and there was no attempt at legislative control of the executive. The king issued only oral orders ('tiruvayk kelvi') (திருவாய்க் கேள்வி) on particular matter in conformity with the general conception of what was fair and just. ('Aram' or 'Dharma'). The king was in no sense a law-maker; he was only the guardian of social life and laws.

The duty of the Central government under the Imperial Cholas was only to maintain peace and security. But it had developed a highly organised and efficient bureaucracy. But this vast host of officials was not allowed to interfere with the free life and initiative of the local government and institutions which were, at the same time controlled efficiently through periodical scrutiny. Thus a fine balance was struck between centralised control and local initiative. It was a delicate composition of monarchical rule with elements of democracy.

The system of village autonomy which flourished under the Cholas had its beginning much earlier. The Pandya and Pallava inscriptions of the 8th and 9th centuries depict a similar system, though not so highly developed, prevailing throughout the Tamil country.

The villages, under the Cholas, were governed by primary assemblies, composed of male adults of the village. There were two types of assemblies, 'Ur' and 'Sabha'. There was also a third type of local assembly, 'Nagaram', confined to mercantile towns. All these assemblies were subject to superivision and control by the Central Government. Their financial transactions were audited periodically by royal officials. Only when important questions like change in their constitutional procedure or alteration of land-rights affecting the revenue of Government were discussed, royal official attended the meetings of the assemblies. Otherwise these assemblies were left to themselves to transact any business and take any decision.

'Ur' was the simplest type of these assemblies. 'Ur' means 'Village' or 'Town'. Here it is used to mean 'assembly of the Village'. 'Ur' was a general type of assembliy and 'Sabha' was the assembly of the Brahmin village or settlement. In several places 'Ur' functioned alongside of 'Sabha' acting by itself or jointly with 'Sabha'. In other places 'Ur' was the only assembly. All residents of the village atteneded the meetings of the 'Ur'. The elders of the village took a leading part in its deliberations.

The executive body of 'Ur' was called 'alunganam' (ஆளுங்கணம்) or ruling group. It was also known as 'Ur-alvargal', (ஊர் ஆள்வார்கள்) those who ruled the 'Ur'.

Chola inscriptions portray the working of 'Sabha' in detail The Sabha was invariably an assembly associated with the Brahmin village. People were summoned to this assembly by beat of drums. There is no record of voting in the Sabha. People of the period preferred harmony to equality. The sabha functioned through committees, known as 'Variyams'. The Uttaramerur (Chingleput District) inscriptions give a detailed account of these executive committees. According to them, each village was divided into thirty wards. Each ward had to nominate for selection persons possessing certain qualifications prescribed. From the persons nominated, one was to be selected for each ward for a year. The method of selection was by lot, known as 'Kudavolai' (Palm-leaf) system. The names of the nominated persons were written on palm-leaf tickets and werer placed in a pot and well shuffled. A young boy was asked to take as many tickets as there were members to be chosen. There were different committees like 'Thotavariyam' (garden committee) 'Pon variyam' (gold committee) and 'erivariyam' (tank or lake committee). The number and descriptions of the 'variyams' and the method of their appointment differed in different sabhas.

Villages were, thus, little 'republics' with a large measure of autonomy in the management of their own affairs. They had the power of taxation for local purposes. They could grant exemption from some taxes. They could also grant remissions and assignment of dues without any reference to the Central Government. The autonomy enjoyed by the villages can be seen from the powers and functions of the assemblies. The Sabha controlled the private lands within its jurisdiction. Reclamation of forests and waste lands, assessment of land revenue, settlement of disputes with regard to land revenue and change in the classification of land were the concern of the assembly. Besides, the Sabha was also in charge of mainten-ance of roads and irrigation works and supervision of endow-

ments. The judicial committee, 'nyayathar' of the Assembly had the responsibility of pronouncing the guilt or innocence of the accused.

Village autonomy under the Cholas flourished between 921 and 1120. This period is called the golden age of the rual Sabha. Two inscriptions from Tenneri (தென்னேரி) of the 11th year of "Rajaraja I" show a gradual spread of the assemblies to all parts of his extensive empire. Life in the villages, which were "little republics, tiny states at the base", was well organised on popular lines under the Cholas. The Chola polity, which was pyramidal in structure with the monarch at the apex, had a broad base of popular assemblies. In this wonderful polity we find a harmonious blending of a powerful monarchy with deep-rooted elements of democracy which speaks volumes for the political maturity of the Tamils.

Great Temple of Tanjore

Perhaps, the greatest phase of Dravidian sculpture, both in stone and bronze was under the Cholas. One of the greatest architectural achievements, from the point of view of sheer size, was realised during the reign of the Chola King Rajaraja, the Great (King of Kings). In A. D. 1000 he erected a temple to the God Siva at Tanjore. This temple, the Rajarajeswara, was 180 feet long and had a tower which rose to 190 feet into the air. The height was achieved by a pyramidical structure, on a base 50 feet square. The top of spire was capped by a large stone, weighing 80 tons! This, surely, can be ranked amongst the greatest of the megalithic achievements. It required a ramp four miles from four miles long to get the stone into position, a gradient of approximately one in 35 feet. This, surely, can be ranked amongst the greatest of the megalithic achievements. This, I think, gives some idea of the determination of both Chola artists and technicians in the realisation of perfection.

- Michael Ridley
'Oriental Art of India'
p. 130.

THE RELEVANCE OF RAJARAJA CHOLA TO INDIAN ART HISTORY-SOME AESTHETIC CONSIDERATIONS

A. Ranganathan

Unquestionably the most outstanding personality of the Chola age in Indian history and the acknowledged spokesman of its new and sublime form of artistic expression was Rajaraja Chola. To his age Rajaraja Chola was not only a famous king celebrated for his military exploits in South India and Ceylon, he was recognized as the architect of the Brihadiswara Temple at Tanjore as well. Just as Rajaraja Chola's famous ancestor, Paranthaka Chola, covered the Sabha of Nataraja with gold at Chidambaram, so did Rajaraja Chola justify his title as **Sivapadasekhara** (crown adorned by Shiva's feet) by constructing the great temple at Tanjore. Equally justified was the other title by which Rajaraja Chola was known **Nityavinoda** (always rejoicing in art). For it was the era of Rajaraja Chola that witnessed the perfect form of Ananda Tandava in bronze Natarajas, the recovery of 'Tirumarais' or the hymns of Saivite Saints the Nayanmars and the perfection of that uniquely subtle musical instrument of the Kaveri delta known as the Nadaswaram.

The great temple at Tanjore, dedicated to Shiva as Brihadiswara in the form of a huge linga, was consecrated by Rajaraja Chola on the 275th day of the 25th year of his reign in 1010 A. D. The architectural greatness of this temple

also known as Rajarajeshwaram, cannot be merely attributed to its size. In fact it is derived from an architectural balance of forces between the main structure which is 180 feet long and the superbly beautiful pyramidal tower which rises to a height of 190 feet. Again this balance is sustained by the component parts of the pyramidal tower of the Vimana. For the square base imparts dignity to the thirteen storeyed tapering body which in turn is set off against the graceful domical finial. Here it is as well to remember that the great Lingaraja temple at Bhuvaneshwar has a tower which rises only to a height of 160 feet. At this point let me quote a passage from Percy Brown's description of the Tanjore Vimana: "In erecting this Vimana on the principles of a pyramid its builders were on safe ground, for such a form not only conveys the impression of solid strength and stability, but is in reality the most permanent structural shape yet devised...... But there is much more than a desire for durability in this example of Chola architecture, for with its qualities of powerfully adjusted volume there is at the same time a sense of graceful balance so that when seen either close to or from afar its upward sweep is such that it appears to hang in the air. Unquestionably the finest single creation of the Dravidian craftsmen, the Tanjore Vimana is also a touchstone of Indian architecture as a whole."

An impressive gateway dominated by a gopuram on the east leads on to the outer court and again through a more impressive second gateway into the main court of the temple. This court, paved with brick and stones, is 500 feet long and 250 feet broad. Actually the main shrine of Brihadiswara is situated at the western end of the main court. The main court consists of the garbagriha or the sanctum and the corridor around it, the ardha-Mandapa, the Maha-Mandapa, the Sthapana-Mandapa with the shrine of Sri Tyagaraja, the Narthana-Mandapa and the Vadya-Mandapa. It has also three main portals known as Keralan-takan, Rasarasan and Tiru-anukkan. And behind the main temple is a shrine dedicated to Karuvur Devar, who greatly assisted Rajaraja Chola in installing the image of Brihadiswara in the sanctum.

Fergusson remarked that "in nine cases out of ten Dravidian temples were a fortuitous aggregation of parts arranged without a plan as accident dictated at the time of erection". However, according to him, "one great exception to this rule was to be found at Tanjore where the temple was commenced on a well-defined stately plan which was preserved till its completion." This temple is also famous for its inscriptions. To select an inscription at random; "From the twentythird year to the twenty-ninth year (of his reign), the lord Sri Rajaraja Deva gave to the supreme lord of the Sri Rajarajeshwara (temple) out of his own treasures and out of the treasures, which he seized after having defeated the Chera king and the pandyas in Malainadu, the following emblems (chihna) of gold, sacred ornaments (abharana) of gold etc.," which were weighed by the stone called (after) Adavallan and engraved on stone-excluding those (gifts of) the twenty-sixth year, which had been engraved on the adjacent stones before this (part of the inscription) on the east of this upper tier (jagatippadai).

The philosophy of **Adavallan**—one who is able to dance-as interpreted by Rajaraja Chola, symbolized an entire universe of values. This great Chola king regarded everything in the universe, whether the chief image of the Brihadiswara temple or the representation of the dancing Shiva in stone or bronze or fresco, or a grain measure, or even a weight for precious metals as an expression of Adavallan. If one realizes how meaningfully the Dance of Shiva is a perception of rhythmic patterns that unceasingly melt into one another, the aesthetic significance of Adavallan that informs an idea or thing becomes clearer. For instance, the painting in the circumambulatory corridor of the Vimana, which depicts Cheraman Perumal worshipping Nataraja at Chidambaram in an aura of piety, is one of the highest expressions of Chola art. Similarly the unique bas-relief figures of Shiva carved on the walls of the Sanctum sanctorum illustrate the dance "karanas" which are formulated in the fourth chapter of Bharata's **Natya Shastra.** Unfortunately, however, there are only 81 'karanas' beginning with the 'Talapushpaputa' or the flower-like gesture and ending with the 'Sarpitam' or the serpentine movement. The remaining 27

'karanas' have not been completed. This unfinished symphony of Rajaraja Chola, is one of the unsolved problems of Indian history. Again the stone Nataraja, enshrined in a niche on the southern wall of the Vimana, is actually a high relief. However, as professor Benjamin Rowland says, "there is a suggestion of the boundless, whirling energy of the cosmic measure even in this stone figure."

The bronze Nataraja, situated in a separate shrine to the north of the Nandi, is one of the greatest sculptural masterpieces of all time. For, this haunting figure, with one leg arched in that sublime expression of creativity and the 'apasmara' crushed under the foot of the other in a whirl of infinite energy that is drawn back into the bronze circle (prabhavali) of infinite repose, reflects the artistic idiom of the Chola age. Truly, one can say of this Nataraja what was said of the Zeus of Phidias that all sorrow and misfortune are forgotten when standing before it. The beauty of this form, in the Ananda Tandava pose, with its exquisite equilibrium of pattern and of movement of infinite energy and of infinite repose, has again and again inspired poetry in the mind of the poets and artists who have reflected on it. Indeed the leap of the dancer not only calls for a leap from illusion into understanding in the philosophical sense, but also a lead of the historical imagination from the 'Samhara Tandava' into the 'Ananda Tandava'.

It is seldom realized that 'Ananda Tandava' pose had neither the sanction of tradition nor the authority of the Natya shastra. In fact there is no 'karana' in the text which corresponds to this mode. Actually some of the Kanchi Natarajas of the 'Samhara' type, which belong to the era of Rajasimha pallava in the eight century, are well known for absence of the 'apasmara' in the general setting of violence. Switching to the 'Ananda Tandava' type, one finds an early example in the niche of the central tier of the Dharma Raja Ratha at Mahabalipuram.

This Nataraja, which dances on the 'apasmara' belongs to the middle of the 7th century A. D. But the archetypal version of Chola Natarajas could only be discerned in a stone Nataraja of the temple constructed by Paranthaka Chola at Tiruvalisvaram

in Tirunelveli Except for the absence of the prabhavali, this stone Nataraja is a perfect specimen of the Ananda Tandava type. While the initial form of the Ananda Tandava was visualized in stone during the time of Paranthaka Chola, it was only in the era of Rajaraja Chola, the illustrious great grandson of Paranthaka Chola, that the form was perfected in bronze.

The Naiks who superimposed their paintings on the original Chola frescoes, had done a great disservice to the Brihadiswara temple. However, the discovery of the Chola frescoes in the vestibule around the lingam at the Brihadiswara temple in 1931 resulted in a deeper understanding of certain trends in the history of Indian painting. Commenting on these paintings, O. C. Gangoli observed; "They invite comparison with the contemporary pala paintings of the Bengali and Nepalese Buddhist miniatures on the one hand and the frescoes of the pallavas on the other hand are to be regarded as the continuation of the pictorial tradition of the Pallava epoch. Curiously, though on the brink of the mediaeval period, these Chola frescoes hardly reveal any trace of the tendency to descend from the best manner of classical Indian painting. In their romantic vision, conception and grandeur, the indications of inheritance from Ajanta are far more markad than the pronouncedly mediaeval character of the 9th century Vaishnava fresco at Ellora." The earlier version of this technique known as 'fresco-secco' or lime medium can be found in the paintings at Sittannavasal, the Kailasanatha and Vaishnava Perumal temples at Kanchipuram. It, however, reached its acme in the fresco technique of the Cholas at the Brihadiswara temple.

Unlike the paintings of the Nayak period which are notable for their crudity of tonal effect and vulgarity of line the Chola paintings reflect an entirely different wave-length, of aesthetic appeal. Actually colour plays a small part in the Chola paintings. Instead of adopting an elaborate colour scheme, the Chola painters made effective use of short

brush strokes either in black or in brown, to build up form. The effect is heightened by areas of ornamentation that highlight the various surfaces and lend an aesthetic intensity and movement which harmonize with the religious vocabulary of the periyapuranam. The Tripurantaka panel is a typical Chola treatment of a religious theme. Although a splash of green symbolizes the forest scene, it is well to note that colour is not the main purpose of the artist. What is remarkable in this 'alidha' posture of Shiva is the evocation of the emotional effect. through the restlessness of design and mood. Here one may follow the line from the figure of Shiva as it moves from the face through the body to the right leg and then to the eight arms which leads finally to the four-headed Brahma, who functions as the charioteer. And at the other end of the spectrum is the serene figure of Shiva in the relaxed sukhasana posture which reveals the range of the Chola painters. In the same panel the eye is directed to the white elephant of Sundaramurthy Nayanar and the steed of Cheraman. The receding space carries the spectator to the figure of Cheraman who looks back and beckons to Sundaramurthy. At the corners, the apsara maidens and the Gandharvas who are almost hidden by the clouds flare out into space and transfigure that sense of the eternal glowing through the momentary nature of the painting.

In addition to the axial structures such as the Vimana, the ardhamandapa, the mahamandapa and the big Nandi, there are several small shrines within the courtyard of the temple. The Brihannayaki shrine was constructed by the pandyan king Konerinmaikondan during the thirteenth century. And the shrine of Subrahmanya in the northwest corner of the courtyard is not mentioned in the Tanjore inscription. Consequently, it is a later addition, However, this lovely shrine, with its delicate figures, pillars and stone carvings, offers a studied contrast to the Brihadiswara temple. Yet another addition is the Dakshinamurti shrine which abuts the south wall of the central shrine.

In any perceptive discussions of the style of Indian art one is aware of three memorable expressions-the wall paintings of Ajanta, the architecture of the Ellora cave temple and the sculptural panels at Elephanta. Ultimately it is a question of aesthetic awareness. For art is a continuing thing of beauty, and its impact depends upon a frame of reference that is both past and present. Seen in this architectonic setting, it has always struck the present writer that the Brihadiswara temple is perhaps the only work of Indian art which has achieved a unique synthesis, of architecture, sculpture and painting. And this monument to the many-splendoured personality of Rajaraja Chola is truly great art. For it is art that transfigures while it transfixes.

CONSTRUCTION OF DAMS AND IRRIGATION CANALS

The Cholas, however, were not merely builders of magnificent architectural masterpieces. Their claim to greatness is based on works of public utility. Great works of irrigation were under taken by successful kings which made the Kaveri delta a granary of the empire. The Chola monarchs conceived the idea of controlling a river at the head of its delta and thus securing the regular watering of lands.

—K. M. Panikkar
,A Survey of Indian History,
PP. 150-151.

RAJA RAJA CHOLA IN KANYAKUMARI

Dr. S. Padmanabhan

Raja Raja Chola came to Kanyakumari in his 8th regnal year and conquered the surrounding region. The present Kanyakumari Distric known as Nanjilnadu during the Sangham period (From 2nd century B. C. to 2nd century A. D.) was initially an autonomous region but later came under the control of all the three Tamil ruling dynasties Chera, Chola and Pandya alternatively. During the period of Raja Raja Chola the whole region was under his viceroy. This paper deals with the close connection between Raja Raja Chola and Kanyakumari in a nut-shell.

Several inscriptions belonging to the period of Raja Raja are found in different parts of Kanyakumari District. Of these the most important are the one belonging to the 8th regnal year and the 27th regnal year are also found at Kanyakumari, Kottar and Tirunandikkarai and Kadiappattinam respectively. Of these the Tirusanamkoppu inscription is the oldest one. It speaks about the victory of Raja Raja at Kandalursalai in Cheranad. The inscription is available at the Raghaveswara Temple.

Why did Raja Raja Cnola come to Tirusanamkoppu first? This is an interesting question. To answer this question we must go to the period of the Ramayana. Sri Rama erected two temples in his life. Both are in the southern must part of India. One is the world known temple at Rameshwaram and the other is the less known shrine of Raghaveswara at Tirusanamkoppu in Kanyakumari District. It is believed that the

temple of Siva at Tirusanamkoppu was consecrated by Sri Rama himself to get redemption from the sin of Sthrihatya (Slaying of a woman). Hence the presiding deity of the temple is called Raghaveswara (Easwara worshipped by Raghava). The temple of Raghaveswara was erected by Sri Rama in Balakanda while the temple of Rameswaram was erected by himself in the Yuddha Kanda. So it can be surmised that the temple of Tirusanamkoppu was erected earlier than the temple of Rameswaram. Near the village stands a hill called "Thadakaimalai', which is said to be the abode of Thadakai, who was killed by Sri Rama.

Raja Raja Chola was a staunch devotee of Siva. He is hence known by another name, Sivapathasekaran. During the period of the later Cholas, the temple of Raghaveswara was well-known to the outsiders. On hearing the fame of this temple, Raja Raja came to Tirusanamkoppu first. His inscription records the appointment of a person to be accountant of the temple and of the village. It is also interesting to note that except the victory over Kandalursalai no other places are mentioned in the inscription. This is the earliest inscription of Raja Raja Chola so far discovered in Kanyakumari District.

Raja Raja made many gifts to the Suchindrum temple. He arranged to perform regular and special temple services. He appointed dancing girls in the temple to attend to temple services and make festivals colourful with dance performance. He also appointed reciters of the vedas in Sanskrit and Tirumurais in Tamil. His inscriptions show that he profusely made grants to the Brahmins. The inscription of Suchindrum temple belongs to the 10th regnal year of Raja Raja Chola. It is between the 10th and 14th year of his reign that the absolute administration of Nanjilnadu under Chola supremacy seems to have been undertaken. This is inferred from the fact that, while the Suchindrum inscription of his 10th year describes the place merely as "Nanjilnattu Tirucivindrum" that of the 14th year speaks of it as "Raja Raja valanattu Tirucivindrum". In the still later Chola inscriptions Nanjilnadu

was described as a sub-division of "Utthama Chola Valanadu" which in its turn, was a district of "Raja Raja Pandi Nadu" (Travancore Archaeological Series Volume VI page 1-6). The introduction of these designations indicates the increasing influence of the colonisation of Nanchilnadu in different periods.

It is a well-known fact that the great temple at Thanjavur was erected by Raja Raja Chola. But it is less known that Raja Raja Chola constructed a small shrine of Siva at Kanyakumari. Kanyakumari is a pre-historic centre of Hindu pilgrimage. Even before Christ, Eratosthenes mentioned Kanyakumari in his travelogue. The author of "Periplus" gives a fine description of this pilgrim centre. Sangham literature praises Kanyakumari. 'Silapathikaram' and 'Manimekalai' also glorify the spiritual importance of Kanyakumari.

The pilgrims who visited Kanyakumari know the famous temple of Devi, the Gandhi Smarak Mandir and the Rock Memorial dedicated to Swami Vivekananda. But the historic Guhanathar temple near the Railway station is not known to an ordinary visitor. The vimana of the temple might have been destroyed by lightning. So the edifice is not visible from the highway.

From the Sthalapurana of Kanyakumari and the inscriptions found in the temple we learn that the temple was very famous during the period of the later Cholas. Historically speaking the temple of Siva at Kanyakumari was renovated by Raja Raja Chola. He also installed an image of Sivalinga in the temple. Unlike in other temples of the area, the size of the Linga is so big that it occupies the whole area of the sanctum. This is the peculiar feature of the style of Raja Raja. It is astonishing to note that the temple of Siva at Kanyakumari was built earlier than the Big temple at Thanjavur. In his 15th regnal year i.e. in 1000 A. D. Raja Raja erected the temple at Kanyakumari. Records say that the construction of the Big temple at Thanjavur was started only in 1004 A. D. and completed in the year 1014 A. D. Hence the temple of Siva at Kanyakumari may be considered as the model for the later Big temple at Thanjavur.

One of the inscriptions found in the temple calls Kanyakumari "Raja Rajeswaram" and the presiding deity "Tirupentheeswarar" (Travancore Achaeological Series Volume I page 249). It is well known that Thanjavur was also called Raja Rajeswaram and the Presiding deity as Thiru Brahadeeswarar Presumbly the word Tirubrahadeeswarar became Tirupentheeswarar. Brahat means Big The image of Sivalinga at Kanyakumari resembles that of the linga at Thanjavur. The temple of Siva at Kanyakumari is of ratha type and the art and architecture of the temple is purely of Chola style. In the inscriptions Kanyakumari is called "Raja Raja Pandinattu Uthama Chola Valanattu Purathayanattu Kumari".

Another interesting fact to be noted here is that a vedic school known as "Raja Raja Raja Perumchalai" was instituted by Raja Raja at Kanyakumari and it was also maintained during the period of Rajendra I and Kulothunga I. Like the Big temple at Thanjavur the small temple at Kanyakumari also glorifies the name and fame of its builder Raja Raja I.

Kottar, now a part of Nagercoil town in Kanyakumari District, was a commercial centre of fame in days of yore. Ptolemy's Geography and Pliny's Travels clearly indicate that it was one of the most important cities during the beginning of the Christian era. There is literary evidence that Kottar was surrounded by a gigantic fort. Recognising its strategic importance, the Chola kings took special steps to strengthen their defence at Kottar. Kottar which thus became a military outpost for the Cholas in the south had consequently became a permanent garrison (Nilasadai). Raja Raja Chola conquered Kottar in 1003 A.D. In memory of his victory over Kottar the place was renamed as"Mummudi Cholanallur". The inscription of Raja Raja I dated the 18th year of his reign (1003 A. D) is found on a pillar in the Kommandaiamm an temple at Vadasery in Nagercoil. There is a temple known as Cholarajakoil near Kommandaiamman temple. The presiding deity of the temple is called Rajendra Choleswarar which means the deity worshipped by the Chola King Rajendra, the son of Raja Raja. This fact is confirmed by an inscription found in the temple. (Indian Antiquary volume xx p. 276).

Udayagiri in Kanyakumari District has been of great strategic importance in ancient days. The Moovarula of Ottakkoothar and Kalingathuparani of Jeyankondar described the war waged by the mighty Chola King Raja Raja against Udayagiri. Raja Raja is said to have destroyed the ramparts of Udayagiri with fire. This fact is borne out by an inscription found at Tirukkovalur. Kalingathuparaui gives a fine description of festival Sathaya Naal, the birthday of Raja Raja, the Great which was celebrated at Udayagiri (Verse 201). The inscriptions on the east wall of the rock-cut cave temple at Tirunandikarai belonging to the 18th year of Raja Raja also mentions the festival of Aippasi Sathayam in the temple (Travancore Archaeological Society volume I page 292). Only after deciphering the inscriptions of Tirunandikarai the historians came to the conclusion that Raja Raja was born in the Sathayam star of the Tamil month of Aippasi. At the end of the Sathayam festival the image was to be bathed in the river (aarattal). It was also required that a perpetual flame be kept before the image in the name of the king. This lamp was to be known as "Raja Raja Tirunanda Vilakku".

Kadiapattinam and Muttam in Kanyukumari District were important sea-ports during the period of Raja Raja Chola. There is an inscription of Raja Raja Chola which belongs to his 27th regnal year on the rock bed near the big tank at Kadiapottinam. During the period of Raja Raja, Muttam and the surrounding area were under the rule of Cholas.

Thus the inscriptions found in various places, in Kanyakumari district, the literary works and the temples in the area help the historians to reconstruct the history of Raja Raja Chola. If further excavations are conducted in the district, more historical facts about Raja Raja Cholas reign could be found.

RAJA RAJA CHOLA - I and THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Pe. Su. Mani

A critical study of the cultural history of India would reveal the unique contribution of the South to the heritage of India. The reputed scholar in Sanskrit and Prakrit languages, Mr. R. N. Dandekar drew the following pointed reference :

> "Indeed the contact between the North and the South involved much give and take-perhaps more 'give' than 'take' on the side of the Dravidians. For instance, the **Suddabhakti** or the way of unmixed personal devotion to God, is believed to have been the special contribution of South India to Indian religious thought. According to **Padmapurana,** bhakti originated in the Dravida country and passed from there into the Maratha country, ultimataly reaching the Gangetic doab round Mathura". 1

Mahatma Kabir (1440-1518 A. D.) one of the pioneers of the Bhakti Movement in North India proclaimed that the Bhakti Movement had its origin in Dravida country; "Bhakti was brought out by Ramanand and Kabir has propagated this into the regions of "Saptha dweep and Navkand". 2

"Srimad Bhagavad Mahathmaya" also endorses this view about the Dravidian origin of the Bhakti Movement. It says, "Bhakti was born in Dravida country, grew up in Karnataka, further developed in Maharashtra and ended up in Gujarat". 3

The Special Features of the Bhakti Movement

The concept of Bhakti is as old as the Rig Veda. Gradually the doctrine of Bhakti was systamatized into a regular philosophy and religion. It came to be known as the Bhagavatha religion and has been variously designated as the Narayaniya. Satvata, Ekantika or Pancaratra religion. Its main sources are the Narayaniya, section of the Mahabharatha, the Vishnu Purana, the Bhagavad Gita, the Bhagavatha Purana, the Pancaratra Agamas, and the Bhakti Sutras of Sandilya and Narada.

The Bhakti movement ushered in by the Saivaite Nayanmars and the Vaishnavite Alwars during the period between the sixth century and the ninth century A. D. was of an entirely different character. As Prof-Nilakanta Sastri says, "They evolved a new type of Bhakti, a fervid emotional surrender to God, which found in due course its supreme literary expression in the Bhagavata Purna (Tenth century), a bhakti very different from the calm, dignified devotion of the Bhagavathas of the early centuries before and after Christ in North India". 4

The great Bhakti Movement of Tamil Nadu produced a large amount of Bhakti literature in Tamil-16,000 hymns of the Nayanmar and 4,000 hymns of the Alwars. In these hymns, devotion, theology, music and aesthetics are all blended together. They remained absolutely unparallelled in any language of the world. Mr **A. L. Basham** considers the hymns as among the India's greatest contribution to world literature. 5

This movement was a reaction against the then dominant religions, Jainism and Buddhism and confronted these religions in all spheres. "Challenges to public debate, competitions in the performances of miracles, tests of truth of doctrine by means of ordeals became the order of the day". 6

Earlier Sanskrit dominated as the powerful medium for the propagation of Hinduism. The Bhakti movement used only the language of the people, Tamil. The simplicity of the language, the musical element and the rare sense of rhythmic pattern and their literary and spiritual values account for their hold on the people. Not only were the hymns of use to the individual householder offering worship in his private residence but more than that, they spurred congregational singing.

This movement ignored caste distinctions. It did not exclude any one for reasons of caste. We can also see the same phenomena in the bhakti movement of the North India.

The Nayanmars and Alwars toured extensively sanctifying the temples by their devotional lyrics and reconverting the kings and leading citizens to Saivism and Vaishnavism.

Swami Vivekananda in the course of his lecture on "Historical evolution of India", stressed the link between the spiritual renaissance and political unity. He says,

> "We have seen throughout the history of India that a spiritual upheaval is almost always succeeded by a political unity extending over more or less the area of the continent which in its turn helps to strengthen the spiritual aspiration that brings it to being".7

This observation aptly fits the emergence of the Chola dynasty founded by Vijayalaya Cholan (800 to 871 A. D.) This Chola dynasty is called "Later Chola Dynasty", in the history of the Cholas. Rajaraja I was REAL founder of the Chola empire.

Rajaraja I (985-1014)

Our late beloved Prime Minister of India Smt. Indira Gandhi paid tributes to Rajaraja on Sep. 16, 1984 at Thanjavore while inaugurating the two-day Thousandth Coronation celebration of the great Chola King Rajaraja I.

The grand function was organised by the Tamil Nadu Government and was presided over by the Chief Minister Mr. M. G. Ramachandran. The Chief Minister aptly pointed out that Mrs. Indira Gandhi who ended the vestiges of princely and monarchic form of Government was participating in this function. Smt. Indira Gandhi described Rajaraja as "One of the most outstanding personality of Tamil Nadu and hero of our history". She continued,

> "In saluting him I pay tribute to the entire age which Cholas represented-350 years of its striving and splendour of its achievements. Rajaraja as an Innovator undertook a comprehansive land survey and created larger revenue units, but he had the prudence to incorporate existing present institutions into semi-autonomous local bodies. It has been said that the most striking feature of the Chola period was the unusual vigour and efficiency of the autonomous rural institutions. Rajaraja and his son Rajendra built a strong Navy and developed merchant shipping. Besides, nearby lands in our region, Chola traders went as far as China in the East and Arabia in the West. The legendary riches of the kingdom came from this trade as well as from the produce of the Cauvery delta. The Cholas prided themselves on having brought the Ganga from the North. The irrigation system and especially the grand Anicat had made Thanjavore one of the Country's great granaries". 8

The above remarkable tribute to Rajaraja is a succinc summary of his achievements.

The power structure, the social structure, religious structure of Rajaraja Chola are to be dealt with separately for a detailed analysis.

Thirumurai Kanda Cholan

One of the titles of Rajaraja Chola is "Thirumurai Kanda Cholan". The Saiva Canon is called Thirumurai in Tamil Rajaraja Cholan took the initiative to recover the sacred hymns of Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar-the trio of the earliest Bhakti movement.

Rajaraja Chola was not satisfied with the collection. He also endeavoured to set them to music. The practice of singing these hymns in the temple had come into vogue in the late Pallava period long before the time of Rajaraja. But Rajaraja was the first to collect all the available hymns and to codify it with the help of Nambiyandar Nambi into different books. He also made elaborate arrangements to popularise them in all the temples.

The "Tirumurai Kanda Puranam" written by Sri Umapathi Sivachariyar of 1300 A. D. describes in detail the efforts taken by Rajaraja for the recovery of the hymns. The various inscriptions of Rajaraja Chola also throw light on the great service of Rajaraja to popularize the hymns, which were called **Thirupathikam** in those days. The other word denoting the **Thirupathikam. Tevaram** was a later usage from **16th** century. Tevaram meant only the private worship. 9

One of the inscriptions in the great temple of Thanjavore runs as follows.

> "உடையார் ஸ்ரீராஜராஜீச்சுரம் உடைய தேவர்க்கு திருப்பதியம் விண்ணப்பம் செய்ய இராஜ ராஜ தேவர் கொடுத்த பிடாரர்கள் நாற்பத்தெண்மரும், இவர்களிலே நிலையாய் உடுக்கை வாசிப்பான் ஒருவனும் கொட்டிமத்தளம் வாசிப்பான் ஒருவனும் ஆக ஐம்பதின் மருக்கு பேரால் நிசதம் முக்குறுணி நிவந்தமாய் ராஜகேசரியோடு ஒக்கும், ஆடவல்லான் என்னும் மரக்காலால் உடையார் ஸ்ரீபண்டா ரத்தேய் பெறவும்".

(Raja Raja Devar appointed 48 pitaras to recite Thirupathiyam before the deity of the temple of Raja Rajeswaram Udaiyar. Besides there was one pitara to play udukkai and an other to play Kotti mathalam both leather percussion instruments like small drums) 10

It was not only the pitarar who were entrusted with the singing of Tevaram hymns. Brahmins also were appointed by the king for the singing of hymns.

Thus the recovery of Thirumurai, their classification and the endowments made for the recitation, all these entitled Raja Raja Chola to assume the title "Thirumurai Kanda Cholan."

In due course the Kamika Agama the Agama which rules most of the temples in South India laid down that the Tamil hymns should be sung immediately after the daily worship in every temple. 11

The recovery of the Tevaram hymns and their popularization was a turning point in the history of Saivism in Tamil Nadu.

Temple Cult :

The Bhakti movement with its emphasis on congregational singing of hymns contributed to the unprecendented growth of Temples and religious establishments. The temple was more than a place of worship. It became the centre of the social economic and cultural life of the people. The temple was at once a consumer of goods and services, an employer, an agency for relief to the poor and a centre of cultural and educational activity. Its influence was felt by the people in all aspects of their life.

The peak of the achievements of Rajaraja I is the **Great Temple** of Thanjavur. It was completed in 1010 A. D. Volumes could be written on the excellence of the architectural, sculptural, and engineering features of this temple. Rajaraja was so fond of it that he named the temple after himself, Sri. Rajarajeswara Temple.

The inscriptional evidence show how the temple cult promoted the fine arts, Dance, Music and Drama.

"The Rajaraja Natakam" composed during the reign of Rajaraja I is based on the life of the king, his great deeds and the building of Rajarajeswara temple at Thanjavur. **"Shri Rajaraja Vijayam"** supposed to have been written in Sanskrit was lectured regularly in the Great Temple. Unfortunately both these literary works have been lost.

Songs from Tevaram and the Prabandham were set to dance music for the Meykuthu or **Akamrkkam**. Sculptural representations of 108 "Karnas" of the Natya Sastra are found in the Great Temple.

Dance dramas based on Tamil stories were called **Tamilkkuttu** while those on Sanskrit and prakrit stories were called **Aryakkuttu**.

One of the major contributions to the Temple cult by Raja Raja was the appointment of Devadasis. Four hundred Devadasis were recruited from Siva temples within the Chola territory and beyond. They were called **Thalai Charipendugal** (ladies living on the streets near the temple) One inscription gives a complete list of the devadasis with the serial number of the houses. Dancing girls of Siva temples had the serial number of the houses. Dancing girls of Siva temples had the trident-Sula mark.

> "There are many instances of women being sold to the temple as slaves. Slavery was not unknown during the period. But this sale of girls to the temple was a refined type of transaction for it was considered an act of dedication to the deity. Hence we see women belonging to respectable families selling themselves to the temples for such services of life long dedication". 12

The temple cult was utilised to adore and worship the Nayanmar. Bronze representatives of the 63 Nayanmar were installed, some of the episodes narrated in hymns were painted on the walls. The Chola artists had drawn their inspiration from the Tevaram hymns which were inscribed on copper plates. More copies of Tevaram were made and preserved in temples. Tevaram classes were conducted. The teacher was called 'Tamizh Vivagar'.

The Temple also functioned as an **employer** Mr. R. Nagaswamy a renowned research scholar has done a valuable research on **"South Indian Temple - As an Employer'** some of the observations he has made are as follows:

> "As an employer the temple set a high standard in public life as can be gleamed from many inscriptions inscribed on the walls of the temple. As a model employer the temple prescribed proper qualification for

serving in various capacities and took great care in the welfare of its workers. Rajaraja the builder of the Great Temple of Thanjavur stipulated strict adherence to proper qualification for the servants employed at the Rajarajeswara Temple. Payments for the work at the temple were mainly in kinds of grain; the quantity being decided at the time of the grants or varied according to the yield of the grain in the land gifted for such purposes. There was not much disparity among the workers in the payment of wages, the responsibility and skill forming the main consideration for higher wages and the caste had no say in the matter".

Mr. N. Vanamamalai, another research scholar analysed the role of the great temple in the economic life of the people and described it as a **Landlord**. Some of his conclusions are given below :

"These inscriptions indicated that 790 persons were on the temple pay roll to perform religious and artistic functions. A substantial part of the empire's surplus was lavished on the festivals and daily performance of dance, music and drama in order to draw people to the temple and to the establishment of theology of Saivism (Siva cult) which enjoyed royal patronage.

"The main form of property being land, the emperor had to make changes in land ownership, tenures and takes up Kanikkatan (rent for the use of land the ownership of which is in the temple deity)

Fund came through two channels. (1) The Kanikkatan from devadanam lands, and (2) Cash receipts in gold from proceeds of specified taxes made over by the state".

Rajaraja effected changes in land ownership in certain cases with a view to stepping up the revenue of the Big Temple. Inscriptions of Rajaraja bear this out. Rajaraja strengthened the devadanams at the expense of brahmadeyas.

The deity of the Thanjavur Temple became the owner of land in all the 45 villages. His name, **peruudaivar** means the great owner of land. The dominating classes were looked upon as agents of the deity enjoying delegated powers.

"As all the land belonging to God, the peasants were taught by religious preachers that they were working for Siva... Any one who protested or grumbled about his bad condition was a **Sivadrohi** (traitor of Siva) and drew upon himself the punishment of God and the emperor". 14

Rajaraja devised so many ways to make tha Great Temple, the richest during his regime. "It had an income of 500 lb troy of gold, 250 lb troy of precious stones, 600 lb troy of silver". 15

The Symbiosis of two cults

The vedic cult and the Saivaite cult are the very ancient cults of India. Rajaraja remained staunch Saivite and at the same time stood for pan Hinduism.

Rajaraja who has made elaborate arrangements for the propagation for Tevaram, endowed so many grants for the study of vedas. The educational system provided in the Temples favourded sanskrit medium. In addition to the studies of vedas Vyakarna, alankara, mimamsa were taugt.

There were 240 brahmadeyas in cholamandalam. The Brahmadeyas or the Brahmin settlements maintained distinctions essential for the preservation and transmission of vedic culture in the Cholamandalam. 16

Mr. D. N. Jha, Prof. of History, also has made a penetrating study on this subject. While challenging Mr. Burton Steins theory on Brahmin peasant alliance Mr. D. N. Jah says :

"Stein's analysis misses the significant fact that the real religious and ideological integration of the people at the upper level in various zones was affected either through the spread of brahminical cults, rituals and institutions or through the brahminisation of the tribal cults, rituals and religious practices".

We can sum up the process of the symbiosis of the two cultures as follows;

Rajaraja united the two main streams of the vedic cult and the Saiva cult. In this process the separate identities of these two cults were not disturbed. Philosophically they maintained their respective individualities but at the same time they were able to grow together in close relationship under the banner of Hinduism. It may perhaps be apt to consider this achievement of Rajaraja as a fulfilment of Saint Appar's observations "Aryan Kandai, Thamizhan Kandai" which means that it is the same God who has founded the Vedas and the Saivism of Tamil Nadu.

Thus Rajaraja Cholan I will ever be remembered for hi- noble service towards the Bhakti movement. It was therefore a fitting tribute to him that on the occasion of the 1000th coronation celebrations of Rajaraja held at Thanjavur, Shri. Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Petum presented a crown for Raja-Raja idol. The idol had been installed during Rajaraja reign near the sanctum Sanctorum of the great temple. The idol was made of pancholoho with a height of 75 cm. Daily poojas are performed to the idol. The idol is taken out in procession during Sathyavizha annually. The late Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi performed the coronation of the idol of Rajaraja,

REFERNCES

1. R. N. Dandekar - "Mythology" -Contribution of South to the Heritage of India - Publications Division, Govt. India reprinted 1965; pp 19
2. Kabir. 3. Srimad Bhagavata Mahatmya
4. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri - **Development of Religion in South India** Orient Longmens 1963-I Edition-pp40
5. A. L. Basham - The wonder that was India-Grove Press. I.N.C. New York 1954 pp330
6. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri - The Culture and History of the Tamils Firmakal Mukopadyay, Calcutta 1964-pp109
7. Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda Vol VI pp166
8. Indian Express-September 1984.
9. Dr. M. A, Dorairangaswamy-The Religion and philosophy of Tevaram-Book 1-University of Madras 1956 pp30.
10. N. Vanamamalai-State and Religion in the Chola Empire-Taxation for Thanjavur Temple's Music and Dance-Social Scientist Vol III Oct. 1974. pp 27
11. Dr. M. A. Dorairangaswamy-opcit.
12. Loganayaky Nannithamby-"The Fine Arts and recreation during the Chola period"-Journal of Tamil Studies - Internationa association of Tamil Research-Vol I Number 2 Oct. 1969. pp63
13. R. Nagaswamy-"South Indian Temples As an Employer" - The Indian Economic and Social History Review-Vol II No. 4 Oct. 1965 pp 368-369.
14. N. Vanamamalai-opcit pp38-41
15. Romila Thapar - A History of India I - Penguin Books Oct 1974 pp211
16. Burtain Stein "Peasant State and society in Medieval Soute India - Oxford University press - New Delhi 1980 and the research paper Naboni Karashima The power srtucture of the chola Rule II International Conference seminar of Tamil Studies at Madras 1968.
17. D. N. Jha-"Validity of the Brahman peasant Alliance" and "The Segmentary State "in early Medieval South India" - Social Science Probings - Vol 1 No. 2. June 1984. pp 288

THE IMPACT OF RAJARAJA ON CONTEMPORARY WRITERS

A. V- Subramanian

For the purpose of this paper, I have selected R. Krishnamurthy or Kalki as he is better known as the representative modern author on whom to assesas the impact of King Raja Raja Chola. Indeed, Kalki selects himself : for there is none that wrote with so much factual knowledge of the great emperor, with so much creativity, there is none that wrote so much in sheer volume as Kalki has done. Kalki who is universally regarded as the father of the historical novel in Tamil wrote the Ponniyin Selvan with Rajaraja as his hero; the novel was serialised in his weekly magazine bearing his name for a period of three and a half years and later issued in five volumes totalling 2300 pages.

When the instalments of the novel were appearing in the weekly paper there was an enthusiasm not noticed elsewhere among the reading public to read them, to discuss them and to debate on the possible outcome, in the homes, bazaars and offices, in marriage gatherings, in the beach and the theatre wherever men congregated. No other literary work could grip the attention of so many for so long, in the publishing history of Tamil. And when the serial came to an end there were readers writing to Kalki in their hundreds complaining in bitter voices that the serial had been concluded too soon.

So, in selecting Kalki's **Ponniyin Selvan** as the most representative work with aid of which to judge Rajaraja's impact on modern writers we feel justified and on very safe ground. In brilliance of design and in expertness of craftsmanship, in sheer story-telling ability, in the vastness of its canvas and the number, stature and calibre of the characters there is no work in Tamil and there can be none in other languages that can serve our purpose better than Kalki's magnum opus.

We shall now proceed to assess briefly the impact of the unique personality of the emperor on the gifted modern novelist. The first aspect of the monarch that strikes the reader and that struck a stranger who first looks on him is his physical attraction. He did not perhaps have the converntional regular features, impelling his devoted sister Kundavai to remark that none of the children of Sundara Chola possessed their father's comeliness of mien. He was not perhaps handsome in the conventional sense but he was certainly not ugly : and his inner qualities shine through the inner crust exuding a personal magnetism that enslaved every one. The younger Pazhuvettarayar who did not regard him as a friend and who indeed, had been actively plotting against him was impressed in spite of himself by the physical appearance of young Arulmozhi (for that was how the emperor had been christened at birth) when he saw him inside the Tanjore fort in the disguise of a mahout.

When he had little by way of achievement in the days of his youth, his subjects admired him and idolised him: this was on account of his charisma. Those were the days of worship of heroism in the battlefield and his elder brother was the most celebrated warrior of his age. The fact that neither the brother nor his uncle Madhurantaka who was a Greek God in his chiselled perfection of features could compete with Arulmozhi in popularity is a measure of his charisma.

Arulmozhi's dominant trait of character that strikes a reader of Kalki's novel is his bravery and his valour in the field of battle. This accords very well with his image in the minds of

cultured Tamils who are familiar with historic personages. He is a great general with a mastery of the arts of war, with unrivalled gifts of leadership. We see frequent references to the unusual fact that his soldiers worship him and that there is a very real fear in the minds of the petty vassals who plot against him that the moment their men see Arulmozhi in the battlefield they would desert their masters and rally round the prince. This, coupled with his personal valour and courage marks him off as one of the greatest military personages in world history.

Though basically unselfish, Arulmozhi nursed vaulting ambitions for the Chola dynasty: he wanted to bring the whole of the country under the Chola banner: he even nursed a fierce desire to bring under the Chola rule Java, Sumatra, Malaysia and Cambodia. While very characteristically rejecting the offer of the council of the Lanka bhikkus of the crown of Lanka, he wanted Lanka to be part of the Chola empire, shrewdly anticipating that as long as Lanka remained outside the Chola hegemony, it offered a most attractive sanctuary to the Pandya kings. When Arulmozhi ascended the throne as Rajaraja he fulfilled much of his dream through extensive military conquests: and vicariously fulfilled his ambition in its entirety through his more valorous son, Rajendra Chola. A remarkable achievement of Rajaraja is the development of a powerful navy which proved a most effective w apon in the hands of his son. Kalki paints a memorable picture of Arulmozhi spelling out his brilliantly conceived plans for the development of the Chola navy, during the climatic crowning ceremony at Thanjavur.

Arulmozhi's plans to develop the Chola navy reveal the essential dreamer, the visionary in him: he is not overwhelmed by the aggresively clamorous events around him, though he deals adequately with them: a part of his personality is concerned with the future, not with his own personal future but with the perils that shall threaten to engulf the Chola empire in the centuries to come, indeed with the future of the whole of India He could hear the distant drum of the fierce conqueror from the north-west and he desired to develop defences against him. In peace, as in war, he was essentially a dreamer, a planner for the distant future : he envisaged a prosperous Chola empire

extending beyond the seas. nourished by a busy maritime trade : he saw in his wonderful vision the builders, the sculptors and the painters from the Chola land creating death-less works of art in distant Java and Cambodia which shall evoke the breathless admiration of unborn generations of men. Seldom in the teeming pages of history do we see such a combination of mutually opposed character traits - the active, brave warrior who loves the art of war who equally can think and dream and envision the shape of things to come. Apart from Julius Caesar. I am unable to point to any other historical personage gifted with such a range of mutually opposed qualities.

In the earlier part of the work, Arulmozhi is consistently pictured and very much under the thumb of his elder sister Kundavai whom he adores. We even suspect that he begins to show interest in Vanatihi only because Kundavai has already decided that they should marry. But, towards the end of the great novel, Arulmozhi shows he has a mind of his own. During the period Kundavai had persuaded herself that Arulmozhi should not ascend the Chola throne, he himself had come round to the view that he should But ultimately he rejects it and actively brings to pass the cornation of Madhurantaka Uttama Chola, a volte face that surprises and shocks the domineering Kundavai.

Arulmozhi's was the true individualism of a dilettante of arts. He loved architecture, sculpture and painting too deeply to allow himself to be grouped. All true artists are fiercely individualistic and many of the greatest have come to serious troble from unimaginative tyrants who mistook their individualism for sedition. Indeed Arulmozhi's warmest wishes were to travel round the world seeing the greatest works of art : and his sincerely nurtured dislike of getting crowned was the typical reaction of a truly artistic nature to the inartistic demands of daily administrative grind. Typically he does not want to flaunt his pedigree, brilliant though it was: in his famous speech at the coronation he demands to be told what personal qualifications, what records of personal achievements he had to ascend the ancient throne of the Cholas ! It is his

firmly-held conviction that every king has to earn his crown through deeds-a thought that would have sent tremors of panic through many a gritless royal breast whose only claim to the throne depended on sanguinary ties, on blood coursing in the veins or blood that is splattered all the way to the throne.

Arulmozhi was certainly individualistic; he reasoned out his course of action and stuck to his decisions, but he was not opinionated never bigoted or fanatical, seldom obstinate. He was a very pious Hindu but could look upon other religion with a friendly eye totally devoid of supercilious patronage. He was much attracted to Buddhism and later on was going to build great monasteries for the Buddhists. He had heard of the wonderful sacrifice Buddha had made and travellers had brought to him enticing whispers of another religion from across the seas, founded on the sacrifice of a man who died on the cross for the redemption of man. He had broad sympathies and a wide and active kind of tolerance befitting a ruler in whose domains lived men of widely varying faiths.

I referred to stories of sacrifice of how Buddha cut his family ties and gave up a life of princely comfort and of how Jesus died on the cross that men might inherit abundant life; and how they all inspired Arulmozhi. From early boyhood he was the fancied and petted child: Prognostications from the greateet astrologers all spoke of an imperial destiny for him: his own sister instinctively knew he was destined for great deeds and high glory. The subjects worshipped him; his own soldiers idolised him. Most men who grew up in this heady atmosphere of adulation would develop into selfish inconsiderate prigs.

But Arulmozhi loved to listen to stories of great men specifically to accounts of mighty sacrifices, not only Buddha and Christ but Rama of Ayodhya who spurned the most splendid throne in the world for the life of an austere hermit in the forests. He drank in these stories and was deeply influenced by what he had imbibed.

His intelligence indicated that Madhurantaka Uttama Chola his uncle had a prior claim on the throne, that some conservative elements might be secretly in favour of the uncle succeeding to the gaddi, that his own father was articulately in favour

of his cousin and not his son succeeding him. His own unrivalled knowledge of men prompted him to ponder over how people in future years might connect him with the death of his brother Aditya Karikala insinuating that Arulmozhi wanted him removed from the path which was to lead him to the throne.

But his emotional personality had a deep-down longing for sacrifice, fed and nurtured by the stories of the great men he had heard. Wedged in his hear was also a still unfulfilled desire to roam the world and win battles making the seas safe for maritime trade.

Urged by these thin internal forces Arulmozhi plans his great coup, leading everyone to believe that he himself was getting crowned, and after systematically removing every obstacle through persuasion and strategem and through plain trickery, he dramatically puts the crown on the head of the astonished Madhurantaka.

This act sends Kalki into raptures : and being a great and gifted writer, he has passed on his own exaltation at this supreme and unprecedented act of sacrifice and self-denial to the readers. The crowning act of his life was literally an act of crowning : he was universally expected to put the resplendent crown of the Cholas on his own head : he confounded everyone by putting it on his uncle's head. There are few instances in the crowded pages of world history to equal this. While earlier we attempted to assess, appraise and measure Arulmozhi's qualities, when we come to this crowning act, we are left speech II less with admiration.

Kalki devoted 2300 pages of powerful, even lusty writing, paving the way for the popular idol to become the emperor But the novel ends without the idol getting crowned. Kalki does not show Arulmozhi ruling as Rajaraja Chola : that is yet in the womb of time. But his impact on the sensitive artistic genius of our times shows up vividly those wonderful potentialities which, maturing from the bud over the years were to blossom into such a wonderful efflorescence.

STAGE AND SCREEN PLAYS ON RAJA RAJA THE GREAT

Puthaneri Subramanyam

William Ridgeway in his Research Book "Dramas and Dramatic Dances of Non-Europeon Races (1915)" has praised Rajaraja, the great, as follows:-

"In the eleventh century A. D., the great Chola King Raja Raja I of Thanjavur built a beautiful Siva Temple in his own name and instituted in it, a dramatic troupe who had to enact regularly every year, the drama 'Raja Raja Nataka' which, indeed as its name indicates, must have been a story celebrating the heroic deeds of the great Chola Emperor... The evidence demonstrates that dramatic performance relating to the life history of such personage form part of the worship rendered to them at every stage that we have described".

It is seen from the inscriptins that king Rajaraja appointed 400 female Artistes for the growth of the three facets of Tamil Art viz 'Muthamizh' and 49 Musicians to propagate Tamil Music.

Rajaraja's great contribution to Tamil Music is the discovery of the 'Thevaram' Hymns of Appar, Sundarar and Gnanasambandar, hidden perhaps deliberately in a dark room at Chidambaram.

It is thus evident that Dance, Drama and Music were patronised by the Chola Kings from the time of Rajaraja.

The original script of the 'Raja Raja Natakam' staged during the Emperor's reign is not available now, though it is said to have been staged annually during the birthday celebrations of Rajaraja.

Rajaraja's greatness has been cherished in some literary pieces like "Raja Raja Ula" (in MOOVAR ULA) by Ottakkuttar and "Kalingattupporani" by Jayamkondar.

In the course of the last one thousand years after the reign of Rajaraja, several plays probably in dance form were likely to have been staged on the lines of 'Raja Raja Natakam'. But there is no evidance to make an account of those performing Arts on Rajaraja.

The first play on Rajaraja was written by Mr. Aru. Ramanathan and it was awarded first prize in the Drama Script Competition held by the famous T. K. S. Bros. professional drama Troupe in 1945.

The script was later developed as a full-length stage play and T. K. S. Bros produced the stage play most successfully in 1955. I was associated with TKS Bros. in the production of the play and I had also written the lyrics for the play.

T. K. Bagavathi, noted stage and Screen Actor, lived the role of Raja Raja and he earned the title "Chozhan Bagavathi" in view of his supreme performance in the majestic role.

His elder brother T. K. Shanmugam the super star of the Tamil Stage, who had earned several laurels and who is popularly known as AVVAI SHANMUGAM. acted as Rajendra Chola, the illustrious son of Raja Raja.

"A fine study in Statesmanship of Raja Raja Chozhan is a gripping play of Court intrigue and Cunningness, of romance and heroism, which gives plenty of scope for suspenseful and moving situations."

This was the tribute given by the popular news paper "BHARAT JYOTHI" Bombay.

The romantic and heroic version of some episodes in the reign of Raja Raja Chola, was treated in 39 interesting and dynamic scenes, with beautiful settings especially in the erection of the replica of Tanjore Big Temple on the Stage.

This popular play was staged for more than Five hundred times in various cities in India and also in Malaysia and Singapore.

This Tamil play was the high light of the Motilal Nehru Centenary Celebrations Cultural festival held in New Delhi in 1961. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was amonq the many leaders who witnessaed and paid rich tributes to the stage play Raja Raja Cholan'.

An abridged form of the stage play of T. K. S. Bros. was also broadcast over All India Radio Madras, Radio Ceylon and Rediffusion in Malaysia.

Hon'ble Dr. M. G. Ramachandran the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, has been contemplating for the past several years to produce a mammoth Film on the historical Novel "PONNIYIN SELVAN" written by the famous Novelist 'Kalki', which is based on the life of RajaRaja the great.

Based on the story of the stage play of T. K. S. Bros, written by the Mr. Aru. Ramanathan, Mr. G. Umapathi, under the banner Anand Movies, produced a Spectacular Colour Film in 70 MM at a high cost in 1972. This has the credit of being the first Tamil Film in 70 MM.

The Top Star of the Silver Screen 'Padma Bhushan' Sri. Sivaji Ganesan M. P., acted as Raja Raja Chozhan. Screen play and direction were the talents of Mr, A. P. Nagarajan.

During the 1000th Coronation Anniversary Celebrations of the emperor Raja Raja, fhe Tamil Nadu Government with the blessings of the Hon. Chief Minister Dr. M. G. R., sponsored,

thro' the secretary to Govt. Tamil Development and Culture, to stage the story of the Chola emperor as a Dance Drama in the pleasant form of a Folk-Love style of "Kayya Koothu".

The script with meaningful and rhythmic lyrics suited for a folk lore, was written by me and the Choregography was done by the well-known Dance Teachers 'Kalaimamani' Nataraj and Sakuntala.

Thiru Natanam Nataraj took the title role and Thirumathi Sakunthala acted as KUNDAVAI, the elder sister of Raja Raja,

Dr. A. Nagaswami's script on 'Raja Rajeswara Vijayam' has also been staged subsequently as a dance drama under the Choreography of 'Kalaimamani' Swamimalai S. K, Rajaratnam.

The glory of Rajaraja is being sung in Musical concerts also by leading Musicians.

Thus, even after one thousand years of his reign the great emperor Raja Raja lives in various Art forms in stage and screen. The big temple built by him at Thanjavur, stands as the great monument to spread his glory for time immemorial.

The Cultural achievements of the Cholas, especially of Raja Raja I, were made possible by the stability of their adminis-tration and their greatest love for Tamil Art and Literature.

Raja Raja Chola whose glory stood the test of time for the past one thousand years, will live in the world History for several thousand years more.

Long live the Tamil Heritage !

SEMINAR on

HISTORICAL FICTION

held on

15th APRIL, 1984

at

BHAVAN'S RAJAJI CENTENARY LIBRARY

MADRAS-600 017

Sri. RAJENDRA AWASTHY

(Secretary General of

Authors Guild of India)

presided

Sri. C. SUBRAMANIAM

(Former Central Minister)

inaugurated,

Keynote paper

HISTORICAL FICTION

Dr. S. Thiruvenkatachari

Many definitions of History are available but none of them seems to be complete. A chronicle Chronologically organised, the story of Kings and Queens and palace intrigues, a bundle of events, a study of the past and an account of wars and conquests are some of the better known approaches to History; but while there may be and could be some element of each one of these factors going into the real make-up of history the substantance of history by itselfcannot be any one of these completely. Perh aps a definition that can come close to the real purpose of history is that it is the presentation of value systems, their origin and their changes over the passage of time and their impact on the various facts of culture and the progress of civilization. History may be understood as the story of man's endeavours to leave indelible foot-prints on the sands of time. From out of these, the human specie has survived by profiting by the sense of direction that these have provided through the ages. History is both the story of human survival and creativity. We shall accept the last definition of history as the frame of reference of our discussion of historical fiction. If the emphasis is on values, and the makers of such values naturally, history becomes the broadest of the broad fields, epistomologically speaking. When values have to be created there has to be an acceptance of a co-operative spirit in which the ego is eschewed, and the goal of every individual becomes self-actualisation which is the opposite of self-aggrandisement. It is the elevation of the self

by its being merged with a common cause or an ideal. In simpler expression it is self-annihilation in the process of a common endeavour involving the whole of mankind-possible, the whole of the created being,including animals. When Yudhistra asked Bhishma for the meaning of this kind of common participation with the goal of attaining a realisation of the self the 'Pithamah - par excellance, excluded, (possibly to test his disciple) the non-human creation of God. The steady-minded disciple, deserving the name of Yudhishtra asked for the common goal of not only the human creation of Gods, but also the non-human creation including what in medical language are called 'Viruses' i. e.- unseeable creature. By raising this question Yudhishtra became the creator of the science of Ecology. Bhishmas answer was just like himself, in the subtlest philosophical terms. He presented 1008 concepts each one of which was by itself a 'Viswam' or 'Universe' which he put as first one among universes. The totality of the 'Viswams' would constitute 'Satyam' The goal of all human endeavour is the attainment of 'Satyam' Rame embodied 'Satyam' so, in answer to the doubt expressed by Parvathi, if non-pandits could easily master the 1008 universes and get into the depths of each one of these, Iswara gave the answer in a capsule form by presenting the name of Rama as containing the essence of all universes. Rama is equal to the 'Sahasranama' (Sahasranama That Tulyam) Rama, as the embodiment of truth lived it and showed that it is not an abstraction but is liveable. He lived what he embodied; the 'Ramayana' is the story of 'satya' lived.

Rama as an avater of God could live it but is it possible for the common man? Rama Himself answers the question it the affirmative (it should be possible) through the disciplining of the mind and the spirit that are the unique inheritance of everybody. He would not call himself an avatar of God for this reason. (Atmanam Manusham Manyc). He was never tired of repeating this because he wanted to impress the need and the possibility of everybody striving after the goal of truth through pursuing the path leading to it. The path itself is not paved with good intentions. This worldly life is a challenge provided to man to overcome the temptations and obstacles in the way of reaching truth. Even godmen have lamented their

limitations. Mahatma Gandhi is perhaps the greatest man of this century to have tried to live a life of truth and the penalty he paid for being in a minority of one in this rather great and most ambitious pursuit is only a firm reminder of the Herculean efforts needed to live truth successfully.

If human endeavours ought to be directed towards a value system with 'Satya' as its foundation, inspiration must come from human experience itself; and this is what History is about. But the question is 'does History base itself on an absolute truth? It does not always, though it has to. History is presented by man whose thinking is more often than not, subjective. This is in all fairness to the best of histories which reflect only what one might call the universaly prevalent subjective element, devoid of any deliberate trait impelling a distortion of truth as a sort of intellectual sadism. There are, no doubt, nihilists among history writers who go by the name of pseudo-historian who get classified along with historians. The historian cannot always be blamed for what he has presented as truth which may be really far from it, because it is his perception of truth. He is subjected to a 'branthi', or an illusion, and what he perceives with this limitation he imagines as truth. There are, no doubt, mercenaries among historians who are prepared to write history for less than a pottage. In the dictatorships of the pre-war epoch, Histories were made to order. It became a bundle of lies agreed upon. One of the dictators gave a recipe for the making of truth in a simplistic manner. You repeat a lie a hundred times and the product is truth. Thus the purpose of history gets lost by doctrines fashioned to the varying hour at the instance of tyrants and despots.

Croce the Italian histroiographer dispairing of any attempt to present the past truly, said that only contemporary history could be history. Even here there is a snag. There may be interpretative variations or even deliberate bias in the viewing of contemporary events. But all the same, the goal of history which is the presentation of values founded on truth in its absolute sense should never be lost sight of, though there can hardly be a single book of history among histories written from the earliest times which is not diluted or vitiated.

While discussing historical fiction today we have spent sometime trying to understand the meaning of history. Even in the best of histories, there is the fictional element present eitiher through ignorance or interpretative inability or deliberate distortion. Thus, in a sense, many if not most of our history books are themselves not entirely out-side the pale of fictional iterature. Even the most objectively organised historical materiel cannot pretend to absolute purity in the descriptive and Interpretative aspects. Even when what is actualiy seen and heard cannot be comprehended correctly with our perceptual limitation, to imagine that the past can be truly presented is to deceive oneself. History, therefore suffers from a limitation which makes it almost impossible for its being classified as a science. J. A. Froude the great historian and historical fiction writer failed in his attempt to make a science out of history. In his **'Short Studies on great subjects'** the very first essay entitled the **Science in Hisoty** speaks more of the human limitations that come in the way of historical generalisations through cause- effect relationship as in the exact sciences.

This limitation of history, i. e., its own relative fictional character makes it undependable as a base for historical. fiction, It would mean more fiction based on less fiction to be charitable. Therefore our historical fictional literature cannot always be said to have its base on real history. But it is not to suggest that literature parading as historical fiction is an exercise in futility, because, not unoften it is the perpetuation of fiction by more fiction. There are such dimensions of history as time, space, traditions and beliefs which can help project a society of a particular period in a particular region of the world with the traditions and beliefs attributed to that age and region. Even as the historion suffers from an inability to sort out truth from falsehood, fact from opinion, the historical fiction writer suffers from an inability to imagine the mores and ways of life of a particular age and is often guilty of anachronism, An exercise is regression is a very difficult one. Moving backward and arriving exactly at a particular period of time to be able to visualise its values, beliefs and way of life requires the imagination of the highes order. Very few writers of historical fiction can pretend to this special insight.

Therefore not many writers of historical fiction trying to recapture a past, have been successful. The present is comparatively less difficult and the only major limitation may be bias or interpretative variation, but the past is difficult to visualise and can be understood only in terms of the present and in such a situation is apt to be mis-represented.

Historical fiction, however, does not lack value as historical fiction because while it may even be misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the past, it may possess literary value. Therefore every attempt, at historical fiction writing has, ateast this value and this kind of literature has therefore a place in intellectual pursuits.

What our friends would perhaps evaluate today may be fictional literature mirroring up a certain period of history as presented by historians of different sorts filling in gaps with figments of imagination which may fit into the historical material. If any historical fiction, in whatever mould it is ast epic, poem-short story or, novel-suffers from its inability to fit into the spirit of fhe age it represents, it has to be blamed on the authorship of the fiction. Therefore, the first essential qualification of a historical fiction writer is a thorough knowledge of history and geography. As I stated earlier, at least with the history available mere using of names of historical persons, places and events and attempting to stuff the yawning gaps with flights of imagination cannot result in historical fiction worth the name. At this point one has to deplore the fact that many of our historical fiction writers have spun their yarns around something that has the least historical value. There are happy exceptions in every literature and it is these that have an enduring value.

I would go a step further and suggest that the writer of historical fiction in any form needs must know how history; it self is being written. The original sources of history are as important to the historical fiction writer as to the writer of history. Though the fiction writer is not attempting history, he, is, at any rate, trying to understand the level of development of the age with which he is concerned, and this is

reflected in the original sources. Perhaps these sources my inspire the twists and turns of the fiction itself. The Brahi script for instance may inspire the concept of national unity, and help provide a moral to those fighting battles for this script for that for sheer linguistic chauvinism. The Harappan excavations on which a theme is based may have necessarily to reflect something of an urban culture and the author of the theme must know all about it. The literary source is equally-important because concepts change their meanings with the passage of time and the conceptual value of any idea applicable to the age under study must be comprehended to escape from a misunderstanding of the concept as used in later times.

In the writing of history, the historian is confronted with different versions of an event; and assuming he is objective to an appreciable degree, he will sift the different versions and accept the one which, in his opinion is plausible. The fiction writer must be acquainted with the different versions, that best he be guilty of basing his theme on a historically unacceptable theory or point of view

Again the fiction writer must, as far as possible, be familiar with the artifacts and materials of culture of his chosen period. That means, he should have seen representations of these in sculpture; painting and architecture of the period.

Perhaps of equal importance is a knowledge of the topography and geography of the region and the neighbour hood if the writers projection of the theme extends into periods and regions different from those of his main theme, he must have thorough knowledge of the history and geography of other regions and periods. Otherwise he will get mixed up in chronological and factual problems.

Traditions and beliefs are integral to history though they may not be preserved in writing. These are also important to the fiction writer.

Geographical determinism is of utmost importance in history. Without going into an elaborate explanation of the concept, we may pinpoint our attention on one relevant factor in this concept. Rivers change their course. All the rivers of India are flowing away from their original courses. A few years ago when I tried to map out the location of ancient Madurai with the help of a Geology professor who had a proton magnetometer, it was discovered that the Vaigai must have been flowing through an entirely different course during the Sangam age. Excavations also showed the original course of the river around the present Somasundaram Colony. The old Pandyas must have ruled a little further away from the present Madurai; and the conjecture is hazarded that the present Arasaradi might have been the location of the palace of Pandyan Nedunchezhiyan. The fiction writer must consider details such as these as important. In my thinking the fiction Writer is not retailing fiction but really trying to achieve the real objective of the historian himself viz. the discovery of truth and its propogation. Fiction is not untruth but the product a of cultivated imagination that has its own logistics and is founded upon reason.

Most of the historical novelists, if not all of them, write on the conventional theme of sexual love with a hero and a heroine and possibly a villain. Some novels introduce a multiplicity of heroes and heroines and anti-heroes. This, has perhaps become a necessity because of the importance of love as a theme in fiction both in Eastern literatures and western literatures. A good and welcome departure from this convention would be to include themes other than sexual love and even animal characters. A novel about the origin of a city or the construction of a great monument or about an act of heroism etc; might be attempted by way of enriching historical fictional literature and incidentaily covering other facets of life.

Monarchy had been the form of Government in India in the past with brief periods of other forms of Goverment. Excellent novels have been produced in Tamil about the deeds of valour of ancient kings and also their devotion to fine arts. Kalki and Sandilyan have distinguished themselves in the presentation of

some of our great rulers as patrons of art such as dance, music painting and architecture. They have also done justice to the heroism of many a king, their patriotic fervour and benevolent rule. It seems to be true that most of our Indian writers justifiably enough, have exalted Dharma, if you would analyse all novels and seek for a central purpose. This is in the Indian grain. But we would need more novels on social history. Contemporary and current history. No doubt, current history is in the making and is a sensitive area even for the most seasoned among novelists. Current and contemporary history needs greater attention and it is gratifying to note that a few novels have already appeared on these aspects of history. I would commend Kalki's and Sandilyan's successful attempts in this direction. Bankim Chandra Chattopadyaya probably set afoot a movement in this direction of novels based on current and contemporary history and it is slowly gathering momentum which is a good sign.

I must pay my tribute to those Tamil novelists who have dug up themes from our ancient history and have presented them as fictional literature. K. Rajendran the worthy son of the pioneer of historical fiction in Tamil has carved out a name for himself by selecting themes that admit of the delineation of all facets of the society of the periods he has chosen. Venugopalan's themes and presentation are also worthy of special note. As the editor and translator of Ganga Devi's Madura Vijayam I happened to follow Venugopalan's Madura Vijayam serial, and was happy that the Kavya of Ganga Devi's has been invested with flesh and blood in a beautiful manner without any damage being done to the Sanskrit original and the history that it has to provide. Kovi Manisekharan's artistry lies in his ability to portray the period of his theme with an imagination brought to bear upon what historians would call the time spirit an important dimension of history.

Mehta has trodden on very delicate historical ground and come through it brilliantly.

Gautama Nilambaran's attempts at recapturing the past have been successful to an appreciable measure.

Historical fiction gained a place of respectability in India long after it had been accepted as a form of literature in the West. English literature can boast hundreds of historically significant fictions in all literary forms, these have been catalogued by Jonathan Neild and Ernest Baker. England produced great novelists (on theme of social history) like Charles Dickens. Sir Walter Scott was more eclectic in his approach bringing up all aspects of history, with the political being given special importance. Macauley wrote brilliant poems such as 'Horatius' and, The Lays of Ancient Rome' bearingon the ancient Roman glory. Perhaps no other poet has written poetry of such bedazzling splendour as Lord Macauley. It is a novel in poetry glorifying patriotic heroism with this message :

'How can man
die better than facing fearful odds
for the ashes of his father's
and the temples of his god's.

Lord Tennyson's Arthurian epics are a portrayal of the period of knight eirantry at its best.

I have brought up a few specimens from the English literature to underline thd importance of presenting themes not only in prose but also in other forms of literature like poetry as has been done in Western literature.

History is the reservoir of themes and an inexhaustible source of ideas for fictional writing. In fact even with the present amazing crop of historical fictional literature one could easily realise that there is a vast unexplored scope in the domain of historical fiction. Our Indian history, right from the beginning has had this difference that within it are anecdoted elements and facts that have a romantic value and the subject tiself provides a temptation to fiction writers. Therefore historical fiction writing, will, like the brook, go on forever in India.

IS IT LITERATURE?

Sandilyan

A few days back my beloved friend Mr. S. V S. who has been a colleague of mine in jouranalism for over four decades descended upon me with a request that I should read a paper on Historical fiction for a Seminar which he said would be conducted under the auspices of the AGI. I wondered then why there should be a seminar for a particular branch of literature. And then he put me wise by saying that there are authors, self-imposed guardians of literature, who are of the opinion that Historical fiction is no literature, at all and said that this type of thought should not go unchallanged. I told him the very idea of divorcing Historical fiction from literature was an immature thought and did not require any explanation thereof. I was averse to reading a paper of this kind because when one looks back the entire Gamut of Literature in English and other languages through centuries, one finds the Historical aspect of literature dominating the scene right from the time of Adam and Eve to the present day.

What is after all Historical fiction ? It is fiction based on History. And what is History ? History is codified incident, relating to aspirations and achievements,oassions and beleives of a past Society. Hence Historical fiction is as much a social story, as any story relating to modern society. To make it clear, the Historical story of a past society whereas what you call a social story now, pertains to recent generations. It can be seen without an ioata of doubt that the difference we have been making between Historical fiction and social fiction is just for the sake of literary convenience.

If you look up the subject without any preconceived ideas or dogmas you will find it is much more difficult to cast a story based on History than coining what we call a modern social story. The reason is obvious.

For what you call a modern social story the material is no far to seek. It is all around you, for you to feel, for you to pick and choose if only the author has the proper perception and capacity to select and the genius to marshall those facts into a theme worthy of recognition, a style that goes to the very heart of the reader. He need not do any research in this regard.

But the task of the Historical fiction writer is not that easy, because he has to write about a past society in whi h he did not live. He has to do intensive research about the period about which he wishes to write. He has to dive deep and go to the veryrudiments of History for his story.He has to collect data regarding the habits, manners and customs of the people, about their mode of life, of how they lived and loved, how they fought and why. All these and much more he has to cull out. In effect he has to live among them as one of them and feel their joys and sorrows. It again requires tremendous genious to give shape to his research and produce a memorable story. In the shaping of such a story of a past society it is not enough to dig into history alone. He has to know a lot of geography because if topography goes wrong, the Historical fiction will lose the very basic elements it needs. Not only this, the Historical fiction writer has also to find the type of the language those people spoke, and the implements of war they employed if there were wars.

In fact the Historical fiction writer will have to go to the past and live with the people of the past and involve himself in their passions, ambitions and what not. He himself should take his reader to those days and to that environment and make him live in that age and feel with those people. As you see, the role of historical fiction writer is hundred times more difficult than that of a social writer.

In the words of Dumas the task of the Historical fiction writer is to "elevate History to the dignity of Romance." It was Brimlay Johnson who opined that Historical fiction has its foundation in truth clothed in the splendour of an artist's enthusiastic imagination.

People who dismiss such artistry and dub Historical fiction as non-literary are to be sympathised with. In the words of Lord Montaigne "it is given to us to villify what we cannot comprehend." If I should add Abraham Cowly, "presumption is our natural and original disease."

Supposing for argument's sake we dismiss all Historical fiction as trash and the so called modern socials justifying prostitution, theft and a whole lot of such material as literature, then what is it you will have to lose? You have to lose Shakespeare whose Historical plays have been acclaimed all over the world as some of the finest pieces of literature about which some of the finest criticisms were written by Hazlit, verity, Deighton and a whole lot of thinkers You also will have to lose, Leo Tolstoy who wrote the Historical fiction "War and Peace" about the excellences of which there can be no two opinions. Then again you have to lose Sir Walter Scott, Alexander Dumas and Stanly Waymen, the Irish novelist whose 'wild geese' is still considered a very fine piece of artistic writing by people who know literature. For want of time and space lam not mentioning more authors who are equally great like Harrison Ains Worth.

Leaving English Literature part, I wish to come to our own country where much greater material have been witnessed. It is needless for me to enlarge upon the achivements of great epic writers Valmiki and Vyasa and also Bhana Bhatta of Harsha Charithra fame and last but not the least, Khalidasa himself whose Historical plays Malathy Madhavam, Malavika Agnimithram have been immortalised. I shall not add Murari's play Anargha Raghavam for paucity of time.

I can quote ample Historical Fiction of eminence in Sanskrit but I shall come closer to novalists of recent past in the North

If you can afford to lose Bankim Chandra condemning him as a non-literary person because he wrote Ananda Mutt a Historical piece and gave us the Vande Mataram to chant, my sympathies are with you.

Coming to Tamil, my own langauge, I shall take you to the five great Epics and also to the Ten Idylls. Most of them as you know historical material woven around kings ot those period like Nedunchezihian, Sengottavan, Karikalan etc. The finesse of those epics are not so far questioned by mos eminent thinkers of our time and before.

That is all what I have to say. If in spite of this materiat you dub historical fiction as non-literature I shall not standl between you and your self imposed belief and leave you in the ivory tower of your own making. God bless you and some day make you see light.

KANNADIGARA KARMAKATHE-A Historical Novel in Kannada

Prof : K. Kushalappa Gowda

Pampa, Ranna and some other Jaina poets in Kannada have amalgamated certain Historical events in their pouranic stories. Pampa has identified his patron, Chalukya Arikesari II, with the hero of Mahabharatha, i. e., Arjuna. Ranna followed him by identifying Chalukya Iriva Bedanga Satyashraya, with Bhima, whom he makes the hero of his work. Thus one may say that in a way, the writing of historical fictions started during the 10th century itself in Kannada. But their objective was different from the early modern Kannada fiction writers, as they wanted to immortalise their patrons in their work and they succeeded in this. In pre-Independence days, i. e., the later part of the 19th century or the early part of the 20th century, writers wanted to provoke the readers to rise up and stand united for bringing independence to the mother land. The feelings of helplessness and ignominy had to be wiped out and for this, they utilised the media of short stories and novels, effectively. 'Kannadigara Karmakathe' "the story of Fate of Kannadigas", written by Galaganatha in the second decader of the present century is one such work in Kannada.

In the introduction to this novel, the author says tha whatever novels that have been published in Kannada till then they mainly dealt with the stores of Rajputs, Maharashtrians and Muslims. This is quite a drawback from the point of view of Kannadigas, especially when there had been a number

of eminent kings, seers and so on. In order to rectify this defect he had written two other novels 'KUMUDINI' and 'BALAKKE BADIDATA' on the Vijayanagar Empire's history. The objective of the fiction writers of Kannada of this period was mainly to deal with (i) the problem of attaining independence from the British, (ii) the reformation of Society and (iii) the problem of unification of Karnataka.

The author's mind is focussed at the lack of self-respect among the Kannadigas and their inert behaviour. This is very meaningful from the point of view of the time and circumstances of that period. The parts of Karnataka were annexed to four different presidencies and princely states like, Madras, Bombay, Hyderabad and Mysore Except the Mysore State, the Kannadiga of other areas were just helpless minorities in their own lands. The pressure of Marathi over the Bombay Karnataka, that of Urdu over the Hyderabad Karnataka and that of Tamil over the Madras Karnataka was so much that itwas feared that Kannada will be wiped out in these areas in a very short time. The Kannadiga themselves had lost all their self-respect and at times there were incidents of their being hesitant for the use of their own mother tongue in public, since they were suffering from inferiority complex. This is only a reflection of the general tendency of the period when under the British rule the local elites thought it prestigeous to blindly imitate language and manners of the ruling foreigners. As the latter has provoked the right thinking and patriotic leaders, the former did the same with regionalist leaders. Though it might appear queer in modern times, its significance could only be guaged with reference to the time depth. Many authors started taking up the historical themes and wove the stories around the events so as to arouse the feelings of nationalism and patrotism among the readers. For this purpose, short stories and novels formed the effective media as many people would read them.

Some of the novels that deal with the historical events had been translated into Kannada from Bengali and Marathi in the formative stage of Modern Kannada literature. Naturally the setting of the stories were all belonging to the respective regions and local heroes. This fact might have irked many Kannada

thinkers of that time. The wealth of old literature in Kannada had not come to light. The vast number of inscriptions had remained in darkness. Therefore, the past and glorious history of Karnataka was submerged during this dark age. Added insult to the injury was the deluge caused by the hisorical fictions of other regions glorifying the respective local histories.

At this juncture of helplessness and vacuum, Galaganath wrote 'KUMUDINI' and 'BALAKKE BADIDATA' first and 'KANNADIGARA KARMAKATHE' next. Alur Venkata Rao, on the other hand wrote, 'KARNATAKADA GATA VAIBHAVA which, though not a fiction, forcefully put their glorious past' in the mind's eye of Kannadigas. By this time, R. Narasimhacharya had published his magnamopus 'KARNATAKA KAVI CHARITRE' in three volumes on the one hand and the European scholars like B. L. Rice, F. Kittel, and others had started publishing many old Kannada texts and epigraphical materials. This has immensely helped to bring an awareness of their individuality among the Kannadigas.

As we have seen, the objective of the authors who wrote historical fiction during this period was to create a feeling ofr self respect among the people and arouse the national feelings among them ! Galaganatha, the auther of KANNADIGARA KARMA KATHE' has recreated the history of the fall of Vijayanagar Empire in this novel.

The story starts with the scene of Ramaraya going for hunting a tiger, where he chances to see a beautiful Muslim girl. He protects her from being a prey to the tiger and in her unconscious condition, carries her to a place of safety. Her kith and kin were separated thus from her and they gave up the search after all their attempts failed. Ramaraya finds out the aunt of this girl who keeps her constant company. Ramaraya and the girl were attracted towards each other and were married, after Ramaraja promises to make her his chief queen. In the course of time, Ramaraya, being ambitious, marries the daughter of the Vijayanagara monarch Krishnadeva

Raya. Therearter the relationship between Ramaraya and his Muslim wife, becomes estranged. Finally Ramaraya leaves his wife to her lot even though she was pregnant. She vows to take revenge on her erring husband and disappears from his kingdom with her aunt. Ramaraya tries to find them out, but does not succeed and later, he forgets about them. After thirty long years, when many changes have taken place in the kingdom, a young ambassador from Bijapur Sultan comes to Vijayanagara court. He behaves himself in a rude manner in the cou:t. He lodges with his mother in the same place where Ramaraya and young Meherjan (now the mother of the young ambassador) had spent their dreamy days together. Though the mother knew everything about Ramaraya, she did not reveal to her son the secret of his birth. On another occasion, this young man has an encounter with Ramaraya in his court over the matter of checking the burkha clad ladies whether they were men carrying an increminating document in the garb of women. However, Ramaraya did not get upset over the unruly behaviour of the young man, but instead, he was experiencing a strange feeling of love and affection towards him. Thereafter, this representative, Ranamastha Khan by name, plays a villainous role, taking advantage of Ramaraya's love towards him. The author has depicted his character both as a valovous and cunning person. Ramaraya believed in him completely and made him the commander ofthe wing of the Muslim army. Ranamastha Khan, who had taken an oath previously in front of his lady love, Noorjehan, to avenge her insult in the court, by beheading Ramaraya, who caused much humiliation to the girl by compelling her to remove the burkha. He, pretending as though he is an antagonist of Bijapur Sultan, who had subjected him to suffer indignity and by conniving with the latter, outwits the most crafty and talented Ramaraya. The strategy of the final battle of Vijayanagar, is graphically described by the author. Ranamastha Khan cunningly manuevours everything to his advantage, deceiving Ramaraya. Finally in the battlefield, Ramaraya was about to reveal to him that Ranamatha Khan was none else than his own son, but before he completed the words Ranamastha Khan, an embodiment of treachery, cut his head in order to fulfill his vow. He took the head to the place where his mother and his beloved

one lived and placed the head in front of them saying that he had avenged the insult as he vowed. His mother, looks at the severed head of her husband with sorrow and narrates the incidents and reveals the fact that Ramaraya was his own father. Ranamastha Khan stands dazed on hearing this. Then the mother taking the head in her hand rushed to the lake and jumped into it. Noorjehan, Ranamastha Khan's beloved becomes furious and averse towards him and expresses that she will never marry a man who committed the sin of killing his own father. Ranmastha Khan comes to his senses now and lifting her in his hands and holding her tight, he jumps to the ake and thus, both of their lives come to an end.

The historical fact is that the three Sultanates teamed together to bring to an end the powerful Vijayanagara Empire and they at last succeeded. The Vijayanagar kings used to maintain an army consisting of Muslims and the very same army gave a fatal blow in the fateful battle. It is also mentioned that a Muslim heir-apparent of one of the Sultanate fled his kingdom for the fear of his life and sought asylum in Vijayanagara during Ramaraya's period. Ramaraya looked after him as his own son according to the ideals of kshatriyas. On many an occasion, this weakness of Hindu kings is taken advantage of, by the Muslim adversaries in medieval India. This very same prince, who later installed himself as Sultan in his kingdom through the help of Ramaraya, joins hands with others and in the battlefield it is said that he killed Ramaraya by cutting his head. We may surmise that the wealth and power of the empire, made its rules arrogant and despotic and also, there were numerous infights in the palace to gain personal benefits. Historians, as well as fiction writers, have painted the portrait of Ramaraya with the colour of vileness and as the one who brought the end of the empire soon. The responsible persons, who should have gathered strength and protected the kingdom, left it in lurch and escaped with whatever wealth they could carry with them. The inhabitants of the city were left to the mercy of pillagers who did not know the meaning of the word mercy.

The characterisation of each part is effective in this novel. Ramaraya has been depicted as a strong willed and crafty man, whereas Ranamastha Khan appears to be valorous, but cunning to the core. Meherjan, the beloved of Ramaraya is beautiful and pious woman who loves her husband with all her heart but, when she was neglected by him, her love turns to hatred to the same degree as that of her love. She is virtuous to the end of her life. Noorjehan is depicted as a beautiful, strong willed and adventurous girl, who takes an oath that she will marry only the person who avenges her insult. But she could not do so when her vow is fulfilled because the man who did so becomes a sinner killing his own father.

Even the objective statements in history regarding the last war of Vijayanagar brings tears to every South Indian, particularly the Kannadigas. This Hindu empire that contained effectively the Muslim onslaughts for over three hundred years was reduced to the dust. Karnataka, through its statecraft, through its benevolent encouragement of fine arts, literature and sculpture has contributed a lot to the web of Indian culture. During the historical period, this abruptly came to an end with the fall of Vijayanagar. The rise and fall of empires and kingdoms is a matter of temporal events. Now the winners and vanquished ones, have both gone into oblivion. As time is the best healer of all wounds,as generation passes the past is forgotten. Similarly, Kannadigas had forgotten their own glorious past and the people who should have taken a place of pride in the country have been reduced to meek and humble folks. It is obvious that we cannot retrieve the past and if any one tried to go back, he will be lost. But the present generation should not loose heart as a helpless lot. A new strength and vigour will upsurge in their hearts if they know what their forefathers were and what they have done. On this line the present novel becomes effecrive in that it helped the readers to visualise their old glory and gain confi dence in themselves. Such novels and other historical fictions, may be defective in some details, but have effectively aroused the feelings of nationalism, courage and confidence, when the whole nation was under the fetters of foreign yoke.

THE HISTORICAL NOVEL

Pro : P. S. Sundaram

Our old friend, Mr Know-All, politician and pedant, Polonius spent quite some time distinguishing between the different kinds of drama—— tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral - comical, historical - pastoral, tragical - historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral. If he did not dilate at equal length on the different varieties of the novel, tragic, comic, romantic, historical, domestic, sociological, it was only because the term novel itself—— a new thing, as it very name indicates——did not come into general use as distinguishing a particular kind of story till, according to the O. E. D., the year 1643, nearly three decades after the death of Shakespeare.

The Italian **novella** described the kind of short story one finds in Boccaccio's **Decamerone** or the Heptamerone of Marguerette of Valois. In English the word novel in the sense of

> a fictitious prose narrative of considerable length, in which characters and actions representative of real life are portrayed in a plot of more or less complexity.

occurs first in 1643, antedating Bunyan's **Pilgrim's Progress** (1678), Defoe's **Robinson Crusoe** (1719) and Swift's **Guilliver's Travels** (1726), all three of which would figure in any history of the English Novel, Defoe's work in particular with complete justification.

The justification of a novel is that it portrays life as it is actually lived, not as it may be imagined in a beast fable or a fairy fable. Defoe, often regarded as the father of the English novel, portrayed characters like Moll Flanders who came from the lower classes of London life. A Richardson or a Jane Austen avoided low life, but also like Defoe confined themselves to the life, they actually knew. With them as with Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, Goldsmith, the thing to be portrayed was real life——

Deeds and language such as men do use,
And persons such as comedy would choose,
when she would show an image of the times,
And sport with human follies, not with crimes.

But one can have too much of life as we know it, and even prose cannot keep the romantic out. The oriental tale, and tales of mystery and horror, made an appeal more instantaneous than the humdrum life portrayed by a Defoe or a Richardson, and the Gothic tale became a great fashion for a while.

It is Walter Scott who first thought of exploiting history for purposes of romance. His **Lay of the Last Minstrel** and **Rokeby** had been very successful poems dealing with events supposed to have taken place in the 16th and 17th centuries. With the appearance of Byron the new poetical star, Scott decided to give up poetry and turn to prose. Most of us in India are familiar with the novels of Scott prescribed regularly at one time for a non-detailed study in the Intermediate classes. Some of us have read them even in the high school stage— **Ivanhoe, The Talisman**. **Kenilworth** and the like.

It is now generally agreed that the farther away Scott went from his own people and times, the less satisfactory his novels are. However exciting for a school boy **Ivanhoe** and **The Talisman** may be, they are far inferior to novels like **The Antiquary** or **Heart of Midlothian. Rob Roy is** excellent less for its historical background than for the picture of the Highlands it so vividly portrays. An exception must however be made of **Woodstock** with its memorable picture of Oliver Cromwell.

One is drawn to the history of ode's own land for purely patriotic reasons. Scott was so drawn to the banks and braes of Scotland. He was also in love with the medieval armours and shields and knight-errantry, but his knowledge of the life of those days is highly idealised, and the characters consequently are like the kings, queens and knaves in a pack of cards.

The fashion set by Scott could not be altogether ignored. George IV when Prince Regent, with taste and discrimination in his literary appraisals, however scandalous his private life, let it be known to Jane Austen that a historical novel on the house of Saxe-Couburg would be greatly appreciated by His Royal Highness. But Jane Austen knew her limitation and was not to be drawn.

In the Victorian age we have historical novels by Bulwer-Lytton and Charles Kingsley now forgotten, Dickens **A Tale of Two Cities** dealing with the French Revolution and Thackeray **Henry Esmond,** a tour de force. Thackeray has so soaked himself in the 18th century that the entire novel is in the style of an 18th century writer. Even so I read a criticism by the Merton Professor of English Literature at Oxford, very sympathetic to Thackeray, that the novelist's portraiture not only of Addison but all the characters in the novel was much too Victorian.

Tamil novelists like Kalki attempting to reconstruct the times of Mamallan and Pulikesi have evidently modelled themselves on Scott— the Scott of **Ivanhoe** and **The Talisman.** Except that the scene is laid in the 6th century, the time of the Vatapi attack on Kanchi when Appar was supposed to have lived, there is nothing accurately documented and verifiable to which we could cling in going through the hundreds of pages making up **Sivakami's Sapadam.** Luckily for us the portraits in the Ajanta caves give us an idea of the dress worn at the time by Princes, Princesses and monks, and these portraits illustrate the novel profusely and spirit us away to a wonderland of wealth and beauty. For the rest, incredible disguises at every turn, and information gathered by eaves-dropping whether at a domestic or a political level, are the tools used to set action in motion. In such circumstances the Ajanta paintings are less two-dimensional than Kalki's characters.

This is not to deny that **"Sivakamyin Sapadam"** has its own interest. Once started, the story keeps the reader's suspense, and like a little child we keep asking, "And then?" "And then?" 'This, E. M. Forster pointed out, was also the supreme virtue of Walter Scott But once the story is told there is very little to think about—except of course the trite themes of the stubbornness of some women and the wickedness of war.

The historical novelist cannot escape the horns of an obvious dilemma. Unless he writes of contemporary events his picture may lack authenticity and be shrouded in a mist of idealism, and unless he is sufficiently removed in time his portraiture of the V. I. P. 's may be altogether biassed.

To Clarendon, Oliver Cromwell was just a brave, bad man and he was convinced that to posterity too he would be nothing more. Robert Graves writing about Milton centuries after his death gives a portrait of him in his **Wife to Mr. Milton** which can hardly be called a fair portrait because even in the matter of dates and facts it seems to be wrong. Shakespeare's portrait of Richard III is only the Tudor idea of that monarch, and grossly unfair to him. His portrait of Joan of Arc in Part I of Henry VI, making her out to be a witch and an adulteress, is utterly unworthy of so great a genius. Bernard Shaw's representation of Joan as the first Protestant and nationalist does far greater justice to all sides concerned, Joan herself, the French monarch, the politicians and the common people, the British and the Catholic Church.

War and Peace is often referred to as the greatest novel ever written. It certainly presents Russia and its people at the time of their greatest crisis in a most memorable fashion. But Tolstoy had an axe to grind. He was determined to make out that in a great war or a battle individual ability or leadership counts for nothing, and as such is purely accidental. There is undoubtely a great deal of truth in that. But his belittling of Napoleon, like H. G. Wells's is almost parenoic. Wellington was far nearer the truth when he said that the

presence of Bonaparte on a field of battle was as good as hale a division. But of course in Moscow General Winter proved more than a match for him.

A modern novelist or dramatist attempting a historical theme dare not be as casual in matters of detail as Shakespeare and the Elizabethans generally were. Julius Caesar wants to know what o' clock, it is. and is told 'tis strucken eight". Cleopatra when she is bored says that she would play billiards. A modern writer would be careful to avoid anachronisms like these. But it needs a Shakespeare at his maturest to present a Caesar or a Brutus, an Antony or a Cleopatra in their essence.

Scott's influence was so great that writers like Alexander Dumas and Victor Hugo followed his example and also wrote historical novels — **The Three Musketeers, Twenty years After, Notre Dame, Ninety Three.** A good deal comes through in these works of fiction of the bustle and stir of those earlier times. Since the approach is just a feeling for the far off rather than a scholarly digging up of the past, what results is understandably and excusably romance rather than history.

Will the mere mention of a great historic personage make a novel a historical novel? Learned academics have found fault with R. K. Narayan's **Waiting for the Mahatma** on the ground that it does not "project" the Father of the Nation as he should be projected. This is the stupidest piece of criticism one can come across. It is no part of a novelist to turn a propagandist even if he is writing a political novel, and **Waiting for the Mahatma** is the story of Sriram and Bharati, not a story of "Quit India" or the Mahatma's assassination. There is a similar criticism of Salman Rushdie's **Midnight's Children** on the ground that the author has not understood the Emergency properly, as if the novel is a political pamphlet setting forth the rightness or wrongness of Mrs. Gandhi's declaration of the Emergency.

Are Kushwant Singh's **Train to Pakistan** and Manohar Malgonkar's **A Bend in the Ganges** historical novels because they deal with incidents during the Second World War or the too truly bloody partition of our country, or are they

just novels of our times which may have sociological value for a future historian and cannot themselves be called historical?

Two novels in English by my friend S. Gopalan have some claims to be regarded as historical —— **Old Tanjore** dealing with the times of Sarfoji Maharaja and the Danish missionary Schwartz, and **Tryst with Destiny** which brings in Netaji Subash Chandra Bose and the I. N. A. In his school days Gopalan was a great admirer of Scott, and must now be feeling happy that in his own way he has done for Tanjore and Netaji what Scott did for Scotland and Bonnie Prince Charlie.

The thrilling times through which Englishmen were passing during Queen Elizabeth's struggle with Spain are the explanation offered to the series of history plays by Shakespeare and his contemporaries. When the Bastard in **King John** concludes that play with

> This England never did, nor never shall,
> Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror...
> Nought shall make us rue
> If England to itself do rest but true

the Elizabethans felt no doubt immensely cheered. But there is always the danger that in the name of nationalism we may each of us be inventing his or her own history. The historical novel in that case runs the risk of becoming all novel and no history. Those whose imagination is their strongest point and have neither the patience nor the aptitude for the kind of research required to present the past objectively will perhaps do well if they call their stories novels instead oi historical novels.

HISTORICAL FICTION IN TELUGU

B. V. Srinivasacharyulu.

'Historical Fiction' is a contradiction in terms. If history is the record of actual events relating to real men and women, fiction is concerned with imaginary incidents and fictitious characters. How then can any writing be dubbed as history and fiction at one and the same time ?

"To-day's news is to-morrow's history". The Indian freedom movement has already become part of history. If we accept that even in social fiction a novelist with a realistic outlook may portray the lives of some real people around him, just changing their names, for obvious reasons, can we not consider it as contemporary history ? Where are we to draw the demarcating line between historical and social fiction?

According to sankara there are three different perceptions of reality : 1. 'Vyavaharika Satya', the phenomenalistic reality with which we are familiar in our day-to-day life, 2. 'Pratibhasika Satya, the illusory reality as that of water in a mirage, of sliver in a pearl-shell, of serpent in a rope and of dream sequences, and 3 'Paramarthika Satya', the absolute or essential reality like 'beauty' perceived by immediate and transcendental vision. Now, is not the reality presented by a languag illusory, whether it be history or literature? The moment the reader closes the book the mental world presented by it vanishes as if by the wave of a maigc wand, What is the difference in the reality presented by history and literature Despite the claims of history that it is objective and is concerned with nothing but reality, can it completely rid itself of the he subjective selection and reconstruction of the historian?

And then, there are our puranas, which we regard as both history and literature, though some of the western scholars might dismiss them as mere myth and legend. And there are novels like Dr. K. M. Munshi's, based on puranas. Do they also not come under historical fiction ?

Kalhana, in the prologue to his celebrated historical poem 'Raja tarangini) defines a true historian thus :

"Dhanyas sa eva gunavan
Ragadvesha vivarjita,
Bhutartha Kathane Yasya
Stheyamsiva saraswati"

(He is the meritorious and blessed one, whose utterances are devoid of favours and prejudices and are committed to revealing the actual fact.)

With these few remarks on the nature of historical fiction, I would now attempt a galloping survey of the emergence and evolution of historical fiction in Telugu Literature.

The centenary of the Telugu novel was celebrated by the Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Akademi in February 1972 in Hyderabad since the first Telugu novel was written in 1872. It is Srirangarja Charitra written by Narahari Gopala Krishnama Chetty. It is a historical novel narrating the story of Srirangaraia, a ruler of Vijayanagar who saves from a numer of bizarre mishaps a Lambadi damsel, Sonabai, by dint of his heroic exploits and finally weds her.

The first Tamil novel Pratapa Mudaliyar Charitam of Vedanayagam Pillai, written in 1879, has been claimed by some Tamil friends as the second Indian novel, the first being Durgesanandini, written by Bankim Chandra Chatterji in 1865 But I am afraid the first Telugu Novel written seven years carlier than Pratapa Madaliyar Charitam has a better claim for the second place among Indian Novels.

There are critics who feel that though the preface of Srirangaraja Charitra claims that it was an "...attempt to delineate the manners and customs of the Telugus in their own langnage, in the form of a novel...", it is, in fact more akin

to the samskrit romances like Kadambari and Dasakumara Charitra than to the modern novel. According to them the Father of the Telugu Novel is the noted social reformer Sri Kandukuri Viresalingam Pantulu, and his Rajasekhara Charitra written in 1878 on the model of the Vicar of Wakefield is the first Telugu Novel, which set a trend in the strucuring of the story around a single heroe's life, in the various narrative devices and in laying the stress on ethical values.

The early phase in the evolution of the Telugu Nove which roughly ends with 1920 saw a spurt of translations from Bengali, and English. Anandamatam, Kapalakundala, Praphulla Mukhi, Radharani and scores of other Bengali-historical novels were translated into Telugu. Among those translated from English may be mentioned I Van Hoe, and Tara of Meadows Taylor. A Malayali Novel 'Indulekha' of of Chandu Menon was also rendered under the title 'Kalavati' by Sri D. Venkatarami Reddy. Venkata Parvatisvara Kavulu, Ketavarapu Venkata Sastri, Chaganti Seshayya and K. Bhaskara-Rao are some of the popular translators of the these period.

Side by side with these translations a number of original works like Ahalya Bai, Hemalatha, Rani Samyukta, Vasumati Vasantan, Pramadavanam, Kanchanamala and Punna Bai also appeared. Luminaries like Chilaka Marti Lakshminarasimham, Kavya Kantha Ganapati Sastri and Venkata Parvatisvara Kavulu are among those who made rich contributions to this genre.

Journals like Chintamani (1880), HIndu Sundari (1902), Kirshna Patrika (1902) and Desamata, and publishing house like Vijnana Chandrika Grandha Mala, Andhra Pracharni Granthamala (1911), Veguchukka Grantha Mala, (1911), and Sarasvati Grantha Mala gave considerable boost to the Telugu Novel during the early period by conducting competitions and serialising the prize-winning novels in various journals. Chintamani prescribed certain conditions while announcing the first ever competition in historical novels in 1896. It stipulated that 1. mere historical facts shall not be narrated 2. the historical dates and facts shall be accurate, 3. a few, fictitious characters may also be added and 4. one of the five

periods of Sri Krishnadevaraya, Sivaji, Akbar, Rana Pratap Singh and Hyderali or Tippu Sultan may be taken as the back-ground.

Dr. Modali Nagabhushana Sarma who produced a doctoral thesis on Telugu novel finds that all the historical novels written during the next 30 years strangely conformed to the pattern set by 'Chintamani.' He condemns Telugu historical fiction as lacking in historicity and he attribute this lacuna to the wrong guide-lines set by 'Chintamani'.

It is true that the historical novels of the early period had satisfied the need of the hour. Yet they seem to sufter not only from slow motion and lack-lustre descriptions, but also from the lack of intensity in literary and aesthetic qualities which alone could render any writing pleasurable for all time. Raja Sekhara Charitra of Kandukuri and Pramadavanam of Venkata Parvatisvara Kavulu have been reprinted recently by Emesco but they do not appear to have found much favour in the eyes of the present-day readership.

The later period (i.e . from 1920 upto date) has not been very much propitious to historical fiction in Telugu. Apart from Dr. Viswantha Satyanarayana, the most widelyread Telugu writer of this century who contributed around 40 novels that may be labelled as historical fiction, there are not more than half a dozen others who made significant contribution to this genre. 'Himabindu' of Adavi Bapiraju set in the period of Sri Mukha Satavahana or his 'Gona Gannareddy, relating to Rudramahadevi's period read more like romances than historical fiction. Out of the four historical novels written by Nori Narasimha Sastri, 'Rudramadevi' is the most outstanding according to God Pilaka Ganapati Sastri.

One important aspect of Telugu historical fiction during the later period is that the boundaries between historical and social fiction became so obscure that Sri Viswanatha's Ekavira a historical Novel and Terachiraju, a social novel do not make any difference from the standpoint of the reader, since both of them are equally romantic. The advent of Romantic movement in Telugu literature, which continues to excercise its influence even to-day, I believe, is largely responsible for this unification of all fiction in Telugu.

'Antaratma' the very first novel of Dr. Viswanatha written in 1918 was historical. Around 20 historical novels. big and small, like Ekavira, Buddanna Senani and Kadim, Chetti were written by him during the early part of his career. During the post-independence period he wrote 12 novels under the series 'Purana Vaira Grantha Mala'' six under the series 'Nepala Raja Charitra' and six under the seri es 'Kashmira Raja Charitra'. Recapitulating his literary out-p ut during the quar ter century between 1947 and 1972 at a meeting organised under the auspices of 'Yuva Bharati' Hyderabad Dr. Viswanatha states :

"Ever since I studied the Britisher's Indian History in my schoo l days allotting meagte space to the Hindu period, and distorting the faots mentioned in our Puranas, my pride, as an Indian got wounded. Later, one Sri Kota Venkatachalam took great pains to reconstruct the Hindu period of Indian history on the evidence of our Puranas and other historical works available in Sanskrit. If he did not get due recognition, the reason is, we have become a nation of slaves.

''Sometime back I read about a small island, 'Mandeno, situated to the south of the Phillippines, The aboriginals' inhabiting the island are Tivolis and their language is 'Tegalag'. All their customs are those of Telugus. The chieftain of that tribe is said to have remarked. 'if we ape the Westerners we shall become their shadows. A shadow has no substance of its own. Who would respect a shadow?' Inspired by his sentiments I wrote 12 novels under the series 'Purana Vaira Grantha Mala'. In my novel Chandragupta's Dream tried so establish the difference between Gupta Chandragupta and Maurya Chandragupta. Basing on the discoveries made by recent excavations done in Egypt I wrotea novel entitled 'Arn Nadulu' (six rivers)."

A giant among modern Telugu writers endowed with a rare gift of insight into men and matters, intense poetic sensibility, burn, ing nationalist fervour and an absorbing style, Dr. Viswanatha is a rare specimen among Indian novelists, who is yet to be closely studied and adequately understood.

Gillian Tindall, the author of 'The city of Gold', an urban hiography of Bombay, makes an interesting observation about the historical perspective of Indians in a recent interview. She says : "Obviously certain types of histories are studied in ndia, local, court histories and such, but the traditiona ndian concept of time and chronology is not quite the same as ours, and, therefore, the European highly chronologica model of history doesn't actually mean a great deal to Indians.'

Asked by the intetviewer as to what the Indian concept of history is, she says, "I don't know. Nor do I wish to discover it".

She is right. It is for us Indians to discover our traditional concept of history, and I think Dr. Viswanatha's historical novels did succeed to a considerable extent in discovering it·

Ficition includes the short story as well. But I am afraid there are few historical short stories in Telugu. I can think of only two or three like Bhogiraloya and Saila Bala of Adavi Bapi Raju, both of which deal with romantic episodes of sculptors. But they are more romantic and fantastic than historical and realistic.

The Tamil races were perhaps the greatest temple builders in the world.........the great pagoda in Tanjore ....by far the grandest temple in India.

—**Ency. Britannica**,
Vol. II, P. 396
(9th ed.)

முன்ஷி-கல்கி கண்ட நாட்டியக்கலை

டாக்டர் கலா. கே. தாக்கர்

ஒரு பொருளின் தன்மையினை மற்றொரு பொருளோடு ஒப்பிட்டுப் பார்க்கும் இயல்பு மக்களிடையே இயற்கையாகக் காணப்படுவது.

இளமான பொருட்களுக்கிடையே உண்மைகள் தெளிவு பெறுவதற்கு ஒப்புநோக்கு ஒரு சாலச் சிறந்த துறையாகும். இவ்வாறு ஒப்பிடும் பொழுது முற்றிலும் ஒப்புமை அமைந்த பொருட்களை ஒத்திட்டுக் காணல் பொருளற்றது. மாறாக, அடிப்படையில் ஒற்றுமையும், கூறுபாட்டில் வேற்றுமையும் காணப்படும் வேறுபாடுகளை எடுத்து உணர்த்துவதும் ஒருவகை ஒப்பீடேயாகும்.

முதலில் தமிழில் காப்பிய ஒப்பியல் நோக்கு மட்டுமே எழுந்தது. இப்பொழுது,சிறுகதை,நாவல் போன்ற இலக்கிய வகையிலும் இந்நோக்கு மலர்ந்து மணம் பரப்பி வருகிறது. இவ்வொப்பியல் ஆய்வு, தற்சார்பற்ற முறையில் அமைய வேண்டும். அந்நிலையில் மொழி வேறுபாட்டால் விளையும் இலக்கியத்தின் சிறப்பியல்புகள் எளிதாக ஒதுக்கத்தக்கன அல்ல. இருவேறு மொழிகளில் அமைந்த ஆசிரியர்களின் ஒரேவகை நாவல்களை ஒப்பிடும்போது, அவர்களின் படைப்பாற்றல் திறத்தினையும், தனித்தன்மையையும் ஓரளவு நன்கு உணரமுடியும்.

முன்ஷி-கல்கி :-

கூர்ஜர இலக்கிய உலகத்தைச் சார்ந்த கன்யாலால் மாணெக்லால் முன்ஷி (1887-1971) தென் கூர்ஜர மாநிலத்திலுள்ள பரோச் என்ற சிறு நகரத்தில் பிறந்தார். பம்பாய் மாநிலத்தில் இளைய வழக்கறிஞராக வாழ்க்கையை தொடங்கினார். பிற்காலத்து, பாரதத்தின் கலைத்துறையிலும், இலக்கியத் துறையிலும், அரசியலிலும் உயர்ந்த பதவிகளைப் பெற்று விளங்கினார். பெரும்பாலும் சாளுக்கியரின் ஆட்சிக் காலத்தைத் தம் கதைக்குரிய காலமாகக் கொண்டு முன்ஷி ஏழு வரலாற்று நாவல்களை உருவாக்கியுள்ளார். அவை,

1.	பாடணின் பெருமை	—	1916.
2.	கூர்ஜரத்தின் செல்வன்	—	1917.
3.	பிருதுவி வல்லபன்	—	1920.
4.	இராஜாதி ராஜன்	—	1922.
5.	பகவான் கௌடில்யர்	—	1923.
6.	ஜெய சோமநாத்	—	1940.
7.	அறுந்த செருப்பு	—	1948 என்பன.

இயற்பெயரே கல்கி என மயங்கும் வகையில் அப்பெயரிலேயே தமக்கெனத் தமிழ் இலக்கிய உலகில் ஒரு தனியிடத்தை ஏற்படுத்திக் கொண்டவர் ரா. கிருஷ்ணமூர்த்தி. 'கல்கிக்கு முன்', 'கல்கிக்குப்பின்' என வரலாற்று நாவல் இலக்கியத்தின் காலகட்டத்தை வரையறை செய்யுமளவுக்கு ஏற்றவராக வாழ்ந்தார். பல்லவர், சோழர் ஆட்சிகாலத்தைத் தம் கதைக்குரிய காலமாகக் கொண்டு கல்கி படைத்த வரலாற்று நாவல்கள் மூன்று. அவை,

1.	பார்த்தியின் கனவு	—	1941	—	1943.
2.	சிவகாமியின் சபதம்	—	1944	—	1946.
3.	பொன்னியின் செல்வன்	—	1950	—	1954.

என்பன.

முன்ஷியின் வரலாற்று நாவல்கள் அனைத்தும் (அறுந்த செருப்பு நீங்கலாக) 1940 ஆம் ஆண்டுக்கு முன்னரேயே வெளிவந்து விட்டன. இவர் தொடக்கக் காலத்திலேயே வரலாற்று நாவல்களைப் பெரும்பாலும் படைத்து விட்டார். இத்தகைய படைப்புக்குக் காரணம் 'டுமாஸ்' நாவல்களின் தாக்கமே என்பதை அவரே குறிக்கின்றார். ஆனால் அவருடைய 'ஜெய சோமநாத், இப்பிடியிலிருந்து விடுபட்டமையால் தனித்தன்மையோடு சிறந்த நாவலாக வடிவம் கொண்டுள்ளது.

பல சிறுகதைகளையும், கட்டுரைகளையும், சமூக நாவல்களையும் படைத்துப் பக்குவப்பட்ட பின்னரே வரலாற்று நாவல்களைக் கல்கி எழுதியுள்ளார். அவற்றுள் 'பார்த்திபன் கனவு' வெறும் புனைகதையாக அமைய 'பொன்னியின் செல்வன்' பெரும் சிக்கல் கொண்டதாக விளங்க, நாவலுக்கேற்ற ஒருமைப்பாடும், கட்டுக்கோப்பும் கொண்டதாய் அமைந்துள்ளது 'சிவகாமியின் சபதம்'.

இவ்விரு வரலாற்று நாவலாசிரியரும், பண்டைய மக்களின் பெருமித வாழ்வை விளக்கி, அதன் துணையால் மக்கள் மனத்தில் புதிய ஆவேசக் கனலைத் தூண்டுவதையே நோக்கமாகக் கொண்டனர். நம் நாட்டின் பழம் பெருமையை உணர்த்துவதன் வாயிலாக, அந்நியரின் அடிமைப் பிடியில் சிக்கியோரின் உள்ளத்தில் விடுதலை வேட்கையை ஊட்ட முடியும் என நம்பினர். அதன் பயனாய்ச் சாளுக்கிய-பல்லவ-சோழரின்

வரலாறுகளில் புகலிடம் கொண்டனர். எனவே அவை பழமையானவை யாக - கடந்த காலத்தனவாகத் தோன்றவில்லை. நாட்டுப்பற்றே அவர்களை வரலாற்று நாவல் எழுதத் தூண்டியது என்பது வெளிப்படை.

அந்நிலையில் - சோமநாதர் ஆலயத்தின் பழம்பெருமையைச் சிந்தையில் கொண்டு, முகமது கஜினியின் படையெடுப்பில் அப்புனித ஆலயம் சிதைவதையும், பிரபாசக் கோட்டை அழிவதையும், சாளுக்கிய மன்னர் பீமதேவனின் முயற்சியால் அவ்வாலயம் புதுப்பிக்கப் பெறுவதையும் காட்டுவது 'ஜெய சோமநாத்' என்ற புனைவு. இதன் உள்ளுறைப் பொருளாக, மாற்றான் ஆதிக்கத்தில் சிதைந்த நம்நாடு மறுபடியும் எழுச்சி பெறும் என்ற புது நம்பிக்கையை முன்ஷி இழையோட விட்டிருக்கிறார். நாவலின் தலைவி தேவதாசி சௌலா, முறைப்படி தனக்கே உரியவள் என எண்ணிக் கொண்டிருந்த சிவராசி, அவள் மன்னன் பீமதேவனின் மனைவியாகியதைக் கேட்டுப் பொறாமையால் துடிக்கின்றான். அடுத்துச் சர்வக்ஞர் பதவி தனக்குக் கிட்டாது என்ற உண்மையையும் அறிந்தவுடன், தன் சிவாலயத்திற்குத் தானே எதிரியாக மாறி, அமீருக்குச் சுரங்க வழியைக் காட்டிக் கொடுத்து விடுகின்றான். கல்கியின் 'சிவகாமியின் சபத'மும் இத்தகையதொரு சூழ்நிலையைச் சித்தரிக்கிறது. இந்நாவல் பல்லவப் பேரரசு சாளுக்கியர் தலைநகரான வாதாபி எரியூட்டப் படுவதையும் சுற்றிப் பின்னப்பட்டுள்ளது. இங்கும் உள்ளுறைப் பொருளாய், அந்நியரின் ஆதிக்கத்தால் சிதைந்த நம்நாடு மீண்டும் எழுச்சி பெறும் என்ற புது நம்பிக்கையூட்டப்படுகிறது. நாட்டிய அரசி சிவகாமியே இந்நாவலின் தலைவி. சிவகாமியின் கலையிடத்துக் காதல் கொண்டு, அவளை அடையமுடியாத நிலையில் தன் நாட்டிற்குத்தானே எதிரியாக மாறிய புத்தபிட்சு நாகநந்தியின் இழிநிலையை நன்கு விளக்குகிறது.

ஒரே காலத்தவரான இவ்விரு நாவலாசிரியர்களின் வரலாற்று நாவல் படைப்புகளுள் மிகச் சிறந்ததாகக் கருதப்படும் இவ்விரு நாவல்களும் ஆசிரியரின் உள்ளக்களத்தின் ஆழத்தில் பல ஆண்டுகள் கருக் கொண்டிருந்து, பின்னரே வடிவம் பெற்றவை என்பது நோக்கத்தக்கது.

அம்முறையில் இருவரும் பயன்படுத்தியுள்ள வரலாற்று உண்மைகள், கையாண்டுள்ள உத்திகள், பின்னியுள்ள கதைத்தன்மை, அமைத்திருக்கும் வருணனை, படைத்திருக்கும் பாத்திரங்கள், வடித்திருக்கும் கலைநிலைகள், உருவாக்கியுள்ள விழாக்கள், காட்டியுள்ள அரசியல், சமுதாய நிலைகள் எனப் பற்பல கோணங்களில் ஒப்பிட்டுக் காணமுடியும். இக்கட்டுரை, இருவர்தம் படைப்பில் அமைந்த கலை வெளிப்பாட்டில் ஒரு கூறாய் விளங்கும் நடனத்தைப் பற்றி மட்டுமே நோக்குகிறது.

நாட்டியம் :-

எந்த ஒரு பொருள் அழகினை எடுத்துகாட்டி உள்ளத்தைக் கவர்கின்றதோ, எழில் நிறைந்ததாய்த் தனித்தன்மையுடன் விளங்குகிறதோ அதனைக் கலைப்பொருள் என்கின்றோம். இக்கலை, ஓவியக்கலை, சிற்பக்கலை, இசைக்கலை, நாட்டியக்கலை எனப் பலவகையாகப் பிரியினும் அவை ஒன்றுடன் ஒன்று தொடர்புடையன.

எழுத்துக் கலையின் வாயிலாகப் படைப்பாசிரியரின் மற்ற கலைகளின் பெருமையையும், தேவையையும் எடுத்துக்காட்டி, மக்களின் உள்ளத்துள் அக்கலை உணர்ச்சியை ஊட்ட முடியும். ஆசிரியரின் எழுத்து, வன்மையுடையதாக இருந்தால் வாசகரைத் தம் எழுத்துத் திறத்தால் அக்கலை உலகத்தை காணவும், அனுபவிக்கவும், ஈடுபடவும் ஆசிரியரால் செய்ய முடியும்.

தம் வரலாற்று நாவல்களின் முடியாட்சியின் சிறப்பான பகுதியை இலட்சிய பாத்திரங்களுடன் முன்ஷியும் கல்கியும் காட்டிச் செல்கின்றனர். எனவே, அரசர்களைச் சுற்றி, அவர்களையே தலைவர்களாகக் கொண்டு பின்னப்பட்ட இந்நாவல்களில் முடியாட்சி அரசியல் முறைகள் இடம் பெறுவது இயற்கையே இவ்வடிப்படையில் நாட்டை ஆளும் மன்னனின் ஆட்சிக்காலத்து நடைமுறைகளை இருவகையாகப் பகுக்கலாம். ஒன்று, போரற்ற அமைதிக்கால நிலை, மற்றொன்று, போர்க்கால நிலை. அமைதியான ஆட்சிக்காலம் மன்னர்களின் ஆதரவுடன் கலைகளின் வளர்ச்சிக்கு இடமளிக்கிறது. போர்க்காலமோ, மக்களின் அழிவோடு, கலைப்படைப்புகளையும் அழிக்கிறது.

கலைகளின் ஆக்கத்திற்கு மன்னர்களின் ஊக்கம் தேவை. அவ்வகையில் பல்லவ, சோழ அரசர்களின் வரலாற்றுக் காலத்தைத் தம் நாவலுக்குக் கல்கி எடுத்துக் கொண்டார். எனவே அந்நியர் ஆட்சியில் நசித்துப் போயிருந்த நமது புராதனக் கலைகள், பண்பாடுகள் முதலியன புனர் வாழ்வு பெறவேண்டும் என்பதைக் கல்கி, சிறப்பாகச் சிவகாமியின் சபதத்தின் வாயிலாகவும், மற்ற இரு நாவல்களின் வழியாகவும் வெளிப்படுத்துகிறார். ஓவியம், சிற்பம், இசை, நடனம் என்னும் கலைகள்பால் இயல்பாகவே மிகுந்த ஈடுபாடு கொண்டவர் கல்கி என்பதைக் 'கர்நாடகம்' என்ற புனைபெயரில் 'ஆடல்பாடல்' என்ற தலைப்பில், ஆனந்த விகடன்' 'கல்கி' வார இதழ்களில் கலைகள் பற்றிய திறனாய்வுகளை வெளியிட்டுள்ளதால் அறியலாம்.

முன்ஷி இலக்கியப்படைப்பிலேதான் பெரும் நாட்டம் கொண்டவர். சோமநாதா ஆலயம் மீண்டும் புது வடிவம் கொள்ளப் பலவகையில் காரணமாயும், துணையாயும் நின்றவர். எனினும் மற்ற கலைகளிடத்து கல்கியைப் போன்று பெரும் ஆர்வம் கொண்டவராக அவரை, அவர் எழுததிலிருந்து உணரமுடியவில்லை. 'ஜெய சோமநாத்' நாவலிடத்து இடம் பெறும் தேவதாசி கங்காவின் மகள் சௌலாவைப் பற்றி எழுதும்பொழுது, அவள்

ஆடலேப்பற்றி எழுத வேண்டியவராகிருர். ஆடற்கலேயைப்பற்றியும், கலே உணர்ச்சியைப்பற்றியும் அந்நாவலில் விளக்கமாகவேஎழுதுகிருர். எனவே தேவையான இடத்தில்கலேயைப்பற்றி விளக்குகிருர்முன்ஷி எனவும், கல்கி தாமே பல நல்ல வாய்ப்புகளேப் படைத்துக் கொண்டு சித்திரச் சிற்பக் கலேகளின் சிறப்பிண வெளிப்படுத்துகின்ருர் எனவும் அவர்தம் வரலாற்று நாவல்களேப் படிக்கும்பொழுது அறியமுடிகின்றது.

நாவலின் தொடக்கம் முதல் முடிவு வரை இடம்பெற்று இன்றியமையா இடத்தினைப் பெறும் தலைவியரைக் கதையின் தலைமை மாந்தர் எனக் கூறுவார். அந்நிலையில் முன்ஷியின் ஜெய சோமநாத் நாவலில் இடம் பெற்ற சௌலாவும் கல்கியின் 'சிவகாமியின் சபத'த்தில் வடிவம் கொண்ட சிவகாமியும், நாவல் களின் தலேவியராய் அமைகின்றனர். முன்னவளாம் சௌலா வரலாற்றில் இடம்பெற்றவள். பிறப்பால் கணிகையர் குலத்தைச் சார்ந்தவள். பின்ன-வளாம் சிவகாமி கல்கியின் கற்பனையில் உருவானவள். தந்தை ஆயன ரின் கலே ஆர்வத்தால் ஆடலரசி ஆனவள். இவர்களேத் தலேவியராய்க் கொண்டமைந்த நாவல்களில் நாட்டியக்கலேயின் மீது, முன்ஷியும், கல்கி யும் கொண்ட பற்றின் வெளிப்பாடு அமைந்திருப்பது இயற்கையே.

இறைவனேயே ஆடலரசனுய்க் கொண்டு வழிபட்டு வரும் நம் பண் பாட்டால், அக்கலேயை வாழ்க்கையாடு இணைத்துக் காணும் இந்திய மாந்தரின் புனிதமான மனப்பாங்கினே உணரமுடிகின்றது. இதனுல், மற்ற கலேகளேவிட ஒரு தனித்த தெய்வீகத் தன்மையை இதன்பால் காண முடிகின்றது. ஓவியம், சிற்பம் என வரும் அனேத்துக் கலேகளுக்கும் அடிப்படைக் கலேயாக இங்கு விளங்குவது நாட்டியமே எனலாம்.

இந்நாட்டியத்திலிடத்து முன்ஷி, கல்கி ஆகிய இருவரும் கொண்ட ஈடுபாடு, நாட்டிய வருணனேயாக, அவர்கள் தம் நாவல்களில் வெளிப் படுகிறது. இவர்தம் நாவல்களும், நாட்டிய நிகழ்ச்சியில் தொடங்கி நாட்டிய நிகழ்ச்சியில் முடிவதைக் காண்கிறேம். எனவே நாட்டியமே அந்நாவல்களின் உயிர்மூச்சாக இழையோடிருப்பதை உணரமுடிகின்றது.

தேவதாசி கங்காவின் மகள் சௌலா. தன் நாட்டியக்கலே தெய்வத்திற்கே உரியது; அவருக்காகவே தான் ஆடவேண்டும் என்ற எண்ணம் கொண்டவள். அதுவே அவள் வாழ்வின் குறிக்கோள் எனலாம். ஆனுல் கங்காவோ, முறைப்படி அவள், கங்க சர்வக்ஞருக்குப் பின்னர்ச் சோமநாதர் ஆலயத்தின் தலேமைப் பதவியை அடையவிருக்கும் சிவராசியின் அன்பிற்கு உரியவளாக இருத்தல் வேண்டுமென ஆசைப் பட்டாள். அவள் தந்தை கங்க சர்வக்ஞரோ அவளே, அரசகுல இளேஞன் சாமந்தன் விரும்புவதைக் குறிப்பாய் உணர்ந்து மகிழ்ந்தார். ஆனுல் பின்னர்ச் சாளுக்கிய மன்னன் பீமதேவன் சௌலாவைக் காதலித்து மணக்க விரும்பிய இடத்துத் தாமே அவர்களின் மணத்தை முன்னின்று நடத்தி வைத்தார். எனவே, சௌலா தானும், தன் ஆட்டமும் தெய்வத் திற்கு உரியன என எண்ண, மற்றவர்கள் அவரவர் போக்கில் அவளே மானுடத்துக்கு உரியவளாக்க விரும்புவது உணரமுடிகின்றது.

சோமநாதர் ஆலயத்தில் ஏகாதசியன்று ஆட வேண்டிய அந்தப் பொன்னான இன்ப வேளைக்காகக் காத்துக் கொண்டிருந்தாள் சௌலா. சங்காவும் அந்த நல்ல வேளையை எதிர்பார்த்துக் கொண்டிருந்தாள். எனவே தாயின் ஆர்வத்தாலும், சௌலாவின் உழைப்பாலும் வளர்ந்த கலை, தொடக்கத்தில் குலத்தொழில் என்ற அளவில் வெளிப்படுகிறது.

யாருடைய கற்பனைக்கும் எட்டாததோர் அற்புதக் கலையைத் தனக்கருள வேண்டுமென இறைவன்பால் வேண்டிப் பெற்ற கலையை அவன் திருமுன்பு ஆடுவதுதான் தன் குறிக்கோளாகவும் தெய்வப் பணியாகவும் கருதினாள் சௌலா. முதல்நாள் ஆட்டத்தன்று இரவு தன்னைக் காளாமுகனின் பிடியிலிருந்து காப்பாற்றிய பாடணின் மன்னன் பீமதேவன், தன்னை அடையாளம் கண்டு கொள்ள வேண்டும் எனும் நோக்கத்தோடு, தன் ஆடல் முறை இல்லாத நாளில் நாட்டியம் ஆடினாள். ஆனால் அன்று சௌலாவைப் பீமதேவன் அந்நிலையில் யாரெனப் புரிந்துக் கொள்ளவில்லை. எனவே, அவள் கலை தெய்வமாய் பணிக்கு உரியதாகவே வளர்ந்து. இறுதியில் தன் உயிரைப் பீமதேவன் புதிதாகக் கட்டிய சோமநாதர் ஆலயத்தில் ஆடி காணிக்கையாக்கினாள். இதனால் சௌலாவின் நாட்டியம் இறைவனுக்கு உரிய நேர்முறை வளர்ச்சியாகவே அமைந்திருப்பதைக் காண முடிகின்றது.

கல்கியின் 'சிவகாமியின் சபத'த்தில் வரும் ஆயனச்சிற்பி, சிற்ப, சித்திரக் கலைகளை நன்கு பயின்று கைவரப் பெற்றிருந்ததோடு, நாட்டிய சாத்திரத்தையும கரைகண்டவர். அவர் தம் ஒரே மகள் சிவகாமி நடனக் கலையில் நன்கு தேர்ச்சியுறுவாள் என்பதற்குரிய அறிகுறிகளைக் குழந்தைப் பருவத்திலேயே கண்டு உணர்ந்தார். எனவே, நாட்டியக் கலைக்கும் தாமே ஆசானாய் நின்று அவளுக்கு அதனைக் கற்பித்தார். அவர் தம் எண்ணம் ஈடேறியது. சிவகாமியின் நடனத் தோற்றங்களைப் பார்த்து ஆயனர் முதலில் ஓவியங்களைத் தீட்டிக்கொண்டு பின்னர் உயிர்களை பொருந்திய நடன உருவங்களைக் கல்லிலே வடித்தார். தந்தையின் படைப்புக் கலைக்கு நிலைஉருவாகச் (Model) சிவகாமி இருந்தாள். எனவே, தந்தையின் விருப்பத்தாற் பயின்ற நாட்டியம் சிவகாமியின் வாழ்வில் முதலில் கலைத்தொழிலாக அமையக் காண்கின்றோம்.

நரசிம்ம பல்லவர் தன் அரங்கேற்றத்தன்று வரவில்லையென எண்ணிச் சிவகாமி அவரோடு ஊடுவதாலும், மாமல்லர் அவையில் இருப்பதை உணர்ந்த நிலையில் அவர் நினைவாகவே ஏகாம்பரநாதர் ஆலயத்தில் அபிநயம் பிடித்த முறையாலும், மண்டபப்பட்டுக் கிராமத்தில் மாமல்லரின் அனுமதி பெற்று, அவருக்காகவே ஆடிய தன்மையாலும், தன் கண்ணுக்குத் தெரியாத ஏதோ ஒரு மறைவான இடத்திலிருந்து மாமல்லர் தன்னைப் பார்த்துக் கொண்டிருக்கின்றார் எனும் எண்ணத்தோடு சாளுக்கிய மன்னர் புலிகேசிக்கு முன்னர்ப் பல்லவ

அவையில் ஆடினமையாலும், அவள் கலை, தன் தந்தையைக் கடந்து படிப்படியாகக் காதலனுக்கே உரியதாகி வரும் உண்மை வெளிப்படுகின்றது. இக்கலையை மற்றவருக்கு உரிமையாக்கச் சிவகாமி விரும்பவில்லை. எனவேதான் சாளுக்கிய நாட்டில் சிறைப்பட்டிருந்தபொழுதும் புலிகேசியின் அவையில் ஆடுவதற்கு மறுத்தாள். ஆனால், பல்லவ நாட்டுக் குடிமக்கள் வாதாபி நகரவீதியில் சாட்டையினால் அடிக்கப்பட்டுத் துன்புறுத்தப்படுவதைக் கண்ட இடத்து, சிவகாமியின் மன உறுதி தடுமாறியது. மறுகணம் வாதாபியின் நாற்சந்தியில் நடனமாடினாள். தன் காதல் கூட்டினைத் தாண்டித் தன் நாட்டு மக்களின் துயர் துடைக்க வேண்டிப் பகைநாட்டின் நாற்சந்தியில் ஆடும்பொழுது அவள் உள்ளத்தில் தாங்க முடியாத வெட்கமும் துன்பமும் ஏற்படினும் அவற்றின் இடையில் இன்பமும் பெருமிதமும் தோன்றின. நரசிம்மர் தன்னை நிராகரித்தாலும் தான் அவரை விடுத்து அகன்று செல்ல முடியாதவள் என எண்ணிய சிவகாமி அவரை இனிமேல் என்றைக்குமே தான் அடைய முடியாது என்பதனை உணர்ந்தவுடன் தன் கலையை இறைவனுக்கே உரியதாக்க முடிவெடுத்து தன்னை இறைவனின் காதலியாக்கிக் கொண்டாள். எனவே சிவகாமியின் நாட்டியக்கலை தந்தை, காதலன், நாட்டு மக்கள், இறைவன் எனப் படிமுறை வளர்ச்சியில் அமைந்துள்ளதைக் காண முடிகின்றது.

எனவே முன்ஷி, கல்கி இருவரும், நாட்டியக்கலை நமையாளும் ஈசனுக்கே உரியது எனும் பாரதப் பண்பாட்டைத் தத்தம் தலைவியரிடம் ஏற்றியிருக்கும் பாங்கு ஒப்புநோக்கத் தக்கதாகும்.

சௌலாவின் நாட்டியம் பீமதேவனை மணந்தமையால் தடைப்பட்டது. அரசனின் மனைவி ஆலயத்தில் ஆடுவதைப்பீமதேவன் விரும்பவில்லை. அதற்கு மாறாகச் சிவகாமியின் கன், அரசியல் சேர்க்கையால், பல்லவ மன்னர் மகேந்திரவர்மரின் துணைகொண்டு வளர்ச்சி பெற்றது.

மயக்கமுற்ற சௌலாவை இறைவன் முன்இட்டு, "இவள் உயிருடன் இருக்கும் வரை ஒவ்வோர் ஏகாதசியன்றும் உன் திருமுன் நடனம் புரிவாள்" எனக் கங்கசர்வக்ஞர் இறைஞ்சி வேண்டியது சௌலாவின் வாழ்வில் மெய்ம்மையானதைக் காண்கின்றோம். சௌலாவின் கற்பனையும் விருப்பமும் அவ்வாறே இருந்தன. அதற்கிணங்க இறுதியில் இறைவனுக்குரியவளானாள்.

சிவகாமியின் கலை தெய்வீகமானது. அது தெய்வத்திற்கே உரித்தாக்க வேண்டிய ஒன்று என்னுங் கருத்தினைச் சைவ சமயக் குரவர் திருநாவுக்கரசரும் பல்லவ மன்னர் மகேந்திரவர்மரும் உணர்ந்தனர். மேலும், தம் கருத்தை ஆயனரிடம் வெளிப்படுத்தினர். ஆனால் சிவகாமியின் உள்ளமோ மானிடக் காதலுள் சிக்குண்டு உழன்றது. தன் கலை மாமல்லருக்கே உரித்தானது என நம்பினாள். ஆயினும், நாவுக்கரசர் போன்றவரின் கூற்றே இறுதியில் மெய்ம்மையாயிற்று. கலையை நோக்கமாகத் தொடங்கிய சிவகாமியின் நாட்டியம், இடையே அரசியலில் கலந்தாலும் முடிவில் இறைவனுக்கே உரியதாகின்றது.

அனைத்துக் கலைகளுக்கும் அடிப்படையான நாட்டியக்கலை ஒரே நிலையில் முன்ஷியின் நாவலில் சுட்டப்பட்டுள்ளது. சௌளலாவின் நாட்டியம் இறைவன் திருமுன் முதற்கண் அரங்கேறியது. பின்னர், மன்னவனுக்காக ஆடியபொழுது அவள் எண்ணம் ஈடேறா நிலையில் ஏமாற்றத்தில் முடிகின்றது. இறுதியில் தன் தலைவன் சோமநாதன் முன் ஆடி, தன் கலையோடு தன்னையும் அவனுக்கே உரியவளாக்கிய நிலையில் அது முழுமை பெறுகிறது.

கல்கியின் எழுத்தில் இக்கலை பல நிலைகளில் பேசப்படுகிறது. பல்லவ அரசவையில் அரங்கேற்றத்தின் போது சிவகாமியின் நாட்டியம் அரசியல் நிலை காரணமாகத் தடைப்படுகிறது. திருநாவுக்கரசருக்கு முன்னால் ஆடிய பொழுது உணர்ச்சியின் வெளிப்பாட்டால் மயக்கத்தில் முடிகின்றது. மண்டபப்பட்டிலோ, பொதுமக்களின் மகிழ்ச்சிப் பெருக்கில் அமைகின்றது. புலிகேசி, பாரசீகத் தூதுவருக்கு முன்னர் ஆடுமாறு ஆணையிட்டபோது தன்மான உணர்ச்சியினால் மறுக்கப்படுகின்றது. ஆனால், தன்நாட்டு மக்கள் துயர்துடைக்க வேண்டி, பற்றுணர்ச்சி எழும்பொழுது பகைவர் நாட்டு நாற்சந்திகளில் ஆடுகின்றது. இறுதியில் உணர்ச்சிகளுக்கு அப்பாற்பட்ட நிலையில் இறைவனுக்கே அர்ப்பணிக்கப்படுகின்றது.

சௌளலாவிடம் காதல் பூண்டிருந்த சாமந்தனின் முயற்சியால்தான் அவளுடைய ஆசைக்கனவு இறுதியில் நிறைவேறியது. மன்னன் அறியா வகையில் அவளுடைய இறுதி நடனத்திற்கு ஆவன செய்தான் சாமந்தன். அவன் சௌளலாவிடம் கொண்ட அன்பு அவளை இறைவனுடன் இணைக்கத் துணை நின்றது.

ஆனால் சிவகாமியின் நாட்டியக் கலையிடத்துக் காதல் கொண்ட நாகநந்தியின் முயற்சி ஒவ்வொன்றும் சிவகாமியைத் தாக்கி, அவளைப் பல நிலையில், பல இடங்களில் ஆடச்செய்தது. இவ்வொருதலைக் காதல் முதற்கண் நரசிம்மவர்மரிடமிருந்து சிவகாமியைப் பிரித்தது. அதன் பயனாய்ச் சிவகாமியின் கற்பனைக் கனவுகளுக்கு ஒரு முடிவு கண்டு, அவளை

இறுதியில் இறைவனடியில் சேர்ப்பித்தது. எனவே நாகநந்தி கொண்ட கலைக்காதல் சிவகாமியை இறைவனுடன் இணைப்பதற்கு நேரடிக் காரண மாய் அமையாவிடினும், அதற்கான வழியைத் தானறியா வகையில் வகுத்துக் கொடுக்கும் தன்மையதாய் அமைந்துள்ளதை உணர முடிகின்றது.

சௌலா, சிவகாமி ஆகிய இருவரின் நாட்டியத்தையும் முறையே முன்ஷியும், கல்கியும் வருணனை முறையில் விளக்கிச் செல்கின்றனர்.

சௌலாவின் நாட்டியத் திறமை சிவபுராணம் பாடல்களின் துணை யால் வடிவம் கொள்கிறது. இறைவனிடத்து அவள் கொண்ட காதலை வெளிப்படுத்தப் பொருத்தமுடைய சுலோகங்களாக அவை அமைந்து சுவையைக் கூட்டுகின்றன.

நர்த்தகிகள் பாடச் சௌலா ஆடினாள். ஆட்டத்திற்குத் துணையாகக் கருவிகள் சேர்ந்தும், தனித்தும் இசைத்தன. கால்களில் சலங்கை ஒலித்திட, இடையில் மேகலை திகழ, நாட்டிய உடையில், வெண்ணிறப் போர்வையில் சிறிய மொட்டாய்த் திகழ்ந்தாள் சௌலா என அவள் நாட்டியத் தோற்றத்தினை விளக்குகிறார் முன்ஷி.

சிவகாமியின் நாட்டியத்திற்குத் திருநாவுக்கரசரின் பக்திப் பாடல் களைப் பெரிதும் துணைக் கொண்டார் கல்கி. மேலும் ஆசிரியர் தாமே இயற்றிய பாடலுக்கு அவளை ஆடச் செய்துள்ளதோடு மகேந்திர பல்லவரின் 'மத்தவிலாச பிரகசன'த்திலிருந்து ஒரு பகுதிக்கு அபிநயம் பிடித்ததாகவும் குறிப்பிடுகின்றார்.

"முன்னம் அவனுடைய நாமம் கேட்டாள்" என்ற நாவுக்கரசரின் அகத்துறைப்பாடல், சிவகாமி மாமல்லரிடத்துக் கொண்ட காதலை வெளிப் படுத்த அமைந்ததோடு, அவள் இறுதியில் இறைவனின் காதலியாகிய மனநிலையைக் காட்டுவதற்குப் பொருத்தமாகவும் அமையத் தேர்ந்தெடுத் திருக்கும் கல்கியின் திறத்தை வெளிக் காட்டுகிறது. மேலும், 'கள்வரோ நீர்', 'வாழி நீ மயிலே', 'நமனை அஞ்சோம்', 'தலைவன் தாள்', எனப் பாடல் அடிகளை அத்தியாயங்களின் பெயர்களாய் அமைத்துள்ள முறை யினைக் கல்கியிடம் காணமுடிகிறது.

சிவகாமி தானே பாடிக்கொண்டு ஆடுவாள். சிலவிடத்துத் தந்தை ஆயனர் பாட, மத்தளம் மற்றொருபுறம் ஒலிக்க ஆடுவாள் எனக் குறிப் பிட்டவர், சிவகாமி நடன அலங்காரத்துடன் தோன்றினாள் என்று மட்டுமே எழுதுகிறார். வேறு எத்தகைய வருணனையும் கொடுக்கவில்லை.

சிவகாமியின் நாட்டியப் படைப்பிற்குத் துணையாய் அமைந்தது ருக்மணிதேவி, பாலசரஸ்வதி போன்றோரின் நாட்டியத்தில் கல்கி கொண்ட ஈடுபாடு என்பர் ஆராய்ச்சியாளர்.

முன்ஷி, கல்கி ஆகிய இருவரும் தம் நாவல் தலைவியரின் மனநிலைக்கு ஏற்பப் பாடல்களைத் தேர்தெடுத்திருக்கும் பாங்கினையும், அவர்களின் ஆடல் கலையினை எழுத்தோவியமாக்கி வடித்திருக்கும் முறையினையும் சிறப்பாகக் காணமுடிகின்றது.

முன்ஷியின் நாவல்களில் கலைகளின் வெளிப்பாடு தேவையான அளவிலும், சுருக்கமான போக்கிலும் அமைந்துள்ளதைக் காணமுடி கின்றது. எனவே எதனையும் அளவோடு கூறும் இயல்பு முன்ஷியிடம் உள்ளது. ஓவியக் கலையைக் குறித்து வரைதற்கு அவர் நாவல்களில் வாய்ப்பில்லை. சிற்பக் கலையைப் பற்றிச் சித்திரிக்கச் சோமநாதர் ஆலயம் இடம் அளித்தது. அதனை, மிகைப்படுத்தலின்றி அளவோடு, கூறுகிறார். அதே நாவலில் சௌலாவின் நாட்டியத்தைப் பற்றிப் பல இடங்களில் விரிவாகப் பேசுகின்றார். அவள் நாட்டியம் நாவலோடு இணைந்து செல்வதால் அதனைப் பெரிதும் விளக்குகின்றார். எனவே அளவோடு, மற்றொன்று விரித்தலாக அமையாத நிலையில் கலையைக் கைபாண்டுள்ளார் முன்ஷி என்பது இவற்றால் உணர முடிகின்றது.

கல்கி தம் நாவல்களில் அனைத்துக் கலைகளைப் பற்றியும் பேசு கின்றார். பார்த்திப மன்னரின் கனவு ஓவியமாக வெளிப்படுகின்றது. 'சிவகாமியின் சபதம்' நாவலின் களம் வாதாபி வரை செல்கின்ற மையின், அஜந்தா ஓவியம் இடம் பெறுகின்றது. அதே நாவல் பல்லவரின் காஞ்சியைப் பின்புலமாகக் கொண்டமையால் மாமல்லபுரச் சிற்பங்கள் மங்காத வடிவம் கொள்கின்றன. அதன் பயனாய் ஆயனச் சிற்பி தோன்றுகிறார். அவர் மகள் நாட்டியம் பயின்றமையின் அவள் நடனமாடும் இடங்கள் நாவலுடன் இணைந்து செல்கின்றன. எனவே, தம் நாவல் களத்திற்கு ஏற்பக் கலைகளைக் கல்கி விளக்கியதோடு 'பொன்னியின் செல்வ'னில் தாமே பல வாய்ப்புகளை ஏற்படுத்திக் கொண்டு தம் கலையுணர்ச்சியை வெளிபடுத்தியிருக்கும் தன்மையும் உணரமுடிகின்றது. கல்கி மிகுதியாகக் கலைகளைப் பற்றிப் பேசிய போதிலும், கதையோடு அவை தொடர்புள்ளனவாக அமைவதாலும் கதைமாந்தர் பற்றிப் பல குறிப்புகளை உணர்த்துவதாலும் அலுப் பூட்டுவதற்கு மாறாகச் சுவையளிக்கின்றன.

இந்தி இலக்கியத்தில் சரித்திர நாவல்கள்

— ர. சௌரிராஜன் (சௌரி)

பிரஞ்சுப் புரட்சியை வரலாற்று நூலாக எழுதிய காலேயில் தெரிவித்த கருத்து; "வரலாறு வதந்திகளின் தொகுப்பு." நெப்போலியன் சொன்னதாவது, "நாம் ஒப்புக் கொண்ட, நம்புகின்ற கதைகளின் தொகுப்பு தானே, வேறென்ன?" இப்படிப் பலதரப்பட்ட கருத்துக்கள் சரித்திரத்தை இரண்டுங்கெட்டான் நிலைமைக்கு இட்டுச் செல்லுகின்றன,

பரிசுத்தமான "நடந்தது நடந்தபடியே" என்று முத்திரையிட்டாலும், நம்ப மறுக்கும் மனித சமுதாயத்தில், சரித்திரத்தின் நிஜத்தை சந்தேகிக்காமல் இருக்க முடியாது. இருந்தாலும்', படிப்பினைக்காக, சிந்தனை வளர்ச்சிக்காக, சுவாரசியத்திற்காக வரலாறும் கதைக்கப்பட்டு புதினமாகிறது, நம்பும்படி நிர்ப்பந்திக்கிறது. இதில் பெருமைப்பட, மகிழ்வடைய, ஊக்கம் பெற, சிலாகித்துக் கொள்ள நிறைய வசதிகள் உள்ளன. மனமகிழ் இலக்கியத்திற்கும் இவைதானே ஜீவ சத்துக்கள்.

இந்தி இலக்கியத்தில் சரித்திர நவீனங்களை உருவாக்க ஊக்கமளித்தவர் பாரதேந்து அரிச்சந்திரர். 19 ஆம் நூற்றுண்டின் இறுதியில் பிரபல நாடக ஆசிரியராகவும், கவிஞராகவும், பத்திரிகை ஆசிரியராகவும் திகழ்ந்த பாரதேந்து இந்திய தேசீய எழுச்சிக்கு வித்திட்டவர். மகாகவி பாரதியும் காசி மாநகரில் வாழ்ந்தபோது இவருடைய பாடல்களாலும் நாடகங்களாலும் ஊக்கம் பெற்றவர். இவர் எழுதிய 'காஷ்மீர குசும்' (ராஜதரங்கினியை ஆதாரமாகக் கொண்டது), 'பாத்ஷாஹ் தர்பண்' இரண்டும் சரித்திரத்தை ஆதாரமாகக் கொண்டவை.

பாரதேந்து காலத்தில் இந்தி இலக்கியத்தை வெகுவாகப் பாதித்தவர் வங்க நாவலாசிரியர் பங்கிம் சந்திர சட்டர்ஜி. இவருடைய ஆனந்த

மடம், விஷவிருட்சம் முதலிய நாவல்கள் இந்தியில் மொழி பெயர்க்கப் பட்டு, வெகுவாக வரவேற்கப்பட்டன. வங்க நாடகாசிரியர் டி. எல். ராயின் சரித்திர நாடகங்களும் இந்தி வாசகர்களிடையே பெரு மதிப்பைப் பெற்றன. தொடர்ந்து, மராட்டி மொழியிலிருந்தும் பல சரித்திர நாவல்கள், நாடகங்கள் இந்தியில் வந்தன. பிறகுதான் இந்தி எழுத்தாளர்களிடையே சரித்திர நவீனம் படைக்கும் ஆர்வம் வளரலா யிற்று. 1850 முதல் 1900 வரையிலான காலகட்டத்தில் பல இந்திப் பத்திரிகைகள் தோன்றி, வாசகர்களிடையே, சரித்திர, கலாச்சார பிரக் ஞையை ஏற்படுத்தின. எனினும் புராண இதிகாசக் கதைகள்தாம் இலக்கியப் படைப்பிற்கு ஆதாரங்களாக இருந்தன. 19ம்ஆம் நூற்றாண் டின் இறுதியில் ஃபெடரிக் பின்காட் எனும் ஆங்கிலேய எழுத்தாளர், இந்தி மொழி கற்றுக் கொண்டு, இந்தியில் 'விக்டோரியா சரித்ரம்' எனும் சமகால சரித்திரத்தை சுவைபட எழுதி வெளியிட்டார். சரித்திரக்கதை எழுத பல இந்தி ஆசிரியர்களை இந்த நூல் ஊக்குவித்தது.

பாபு ராமகிருஷ்ண வர்மா ஆங்கிலம், உருது, வங்காளி மொழிகளி லிருந்து சில சரித்திர நாவல்களை இந்தியில் மொழி பெயர்த்தார். 1890-1900 ஆம் ஆண்டுகளுக்கிடையில் வெளிவந்தவை, அக்பர், சித்தூர் சாதகீ, போலீஸ் விருத்நாந்த மாலா முதலியவை. ராஜபுதனத்து சித்தூர் அரச வம்சத்தைப் பற்றிய வங்க நாவலின் மொழிபெயர்ப்பு 'சித்தூர் சாதகீ' வெளிவந்ததும் சித்தூர் அரச வமிசத்தார்கள் பலத்த எதிர்ப்புத் தெரிவித்ததும், அப்புத்தகங்களைக் கங்கையில் வீசி எறிந்து விட்டு பிராயச்சித்தம் செய்து கொண்டாராம் மொழிபெயர்ப்பாசிரியர். இந்து சமூகத்தின் தோல்விகள், அழிவுகள், சரிவுகள், மூடப்பழக்கங்கள், கொடு மைகள் - இவைகளைச் சித்திரிக்காமல் எந்தச் சரித்திர நாவலையும் எழுத முடியாது என்கிற நிலைமை. தம்முடைய குறைகளையும் இழிவு களையும் எந்த இந்து வாசகனும் (அவை உண்மையாகவே இருந்தாலும்) படிக்க விரும்பவில்லை. மேலும், கல்வி - இலக்கியத்துறையில் உருது மொழி - இலக்கிய ஆதிக்கம் மேலோங்கியிருந்த காலம் அது. சுல்தான் - பாதுஷா - பேகம்கள் பற்றிய சரித்திரக் கதைகளுக்கும் இதே கதிதான். புனைந்துரையாக அல்லது கற்பனையாக கதாபாத்திரங்களைச் சிலாகித்து, மேம்படுத்திக் காட்டினால் (வரலாற்றுக்குப் புறம்பாக இருந்தாலும்) அந்த இனத்தவர்கள் விரும்பி படித்தார்கள். இதனால் அக்காலத் தில் சரித்திர நாவலாசிரியர்கள் சரித்திர உண்மையைச் சந்திக்க அஞ்சி னார்கள். புனைந்துரையாகவாவது, கதாநாயகர்களின் தோல்விகளைப் புறக்கணித்து, 'வெற்றித்திலக' மாக வருணிக்கலானார்கள். ஆனால், பல ஆங்கில சரித்திர நாவல்களை அப்படியே மொழி பெயர்த்து வெளியிட்டு வந்தார்கள். இதில் ஆதயம் இருந்தது.

இருபதாம் நூற்றாண்டின் தொடக்கத்தில் கற்பனையாக ராஜா-ராணிக் கதைகள் சிருங்காரம், வீரம், அற்புதம், சோகம் ஆகிய சுவை

களைப் புகுத்தி நிறைய எழுதப்பட்டன. தேவகீநந்தன் கத்ரீ, பாபு ஹரிகிருஷ்ண ஜௌஹர் முதலியவர்கள் இத்துறையில பிரபலமானவர்கள்

1910 முதல் 1930 வரையில் நிறைய எழுதி புகழ்பெற்ற பண்டித் கிஷோரீலால் கோஸ்வாமி பல சமூக நாவல்களுடன் சில சரித்திர நாவல் களும்(தாரா, சபலா, ரஜியா பேகம், ராஜகுமாரி, ஹீராபாய், லக்னோ கல்லறை முதலியவை) படைத்திருக்கிறர். இவைகளில் சரித்திரச் சார் புள்ள பல தகவல்கள் தவறுனவை என்று விமர்சகர்கள் சுட்டிக் காட்டி யிருக்கிறர்கள்.

1930க்குப் பிறகு சரித்திர நாவல் இலக்கியம் தனிச் சிறப்பையும் வாசகர்களிடையே தனிக் கவர்ச்சியையும் பெறத் தொடங்கியது. பிரேம்சந்த் உருது மொழியிலிருந்து இரு சரித்திர நாவல்களை இந்தி மொழியில் தந்ததோடு, பல சரித்திரச் சிறு கதைகளையும் சொந்தமாக எழுதியிருக்கிறர். இவரது சமகாலத்திய எழுத்தாளர்கள் — கௌசிக், சுதர்சன், பிரதாப் நாராயண், பகவதீ சரண் வர்மா, நிராலா, ஜய்சங்கர் பிரசாத் முதலியவர்கள் சில சரித்திர நாவல்களும் எழுதி யிருக்கிறர்கள். பகவதீசரண் வர்மா எழுதிய சித்திரலேகா, ஜைனேந்திர குமார் எழுதிய ஜயவர்த்தன், சுதர்சனின் ருஸ்தம் ஸோஹராப் முதலி யவை அதிகம் பிரபலமானவை.

அடுத்த கால கட்டத்தில் தோன்றிய தலைசிறந்த சரித்திர நாவலாசி ரியர் விருந்தாவன் லால் வர்மா. இவர் ராஜபுதனத்துச் சான்றுகளை நன்கு சேகரித்து, ஆராய்ந்து 30க்கும் மேற்பட்ட வரலாற்று நவீனங்களை இந்தி மொழிக்கு அளித்திருக்கிறர். நம்பகமான, நேர்மையான பரிசுத்த சரித்திர நாவலாசிரியர் என்று பாராட்டப்பெற்ற சரித்திர மேதை இவர். இவருடைய ஜான்ஸி ராணி, விராட்டா கீ பத்மினி, குண்டிலீ சக்ர, மிருக நயனீ, புவனவிக்ரம் முதலிய சரித்திர நாவல்கள் பெறும் புகழ் பெற்றவை. சரித்திர நாவல்களுக்கு இலக்கிய மதிப்பை ஏற்படுத்தித்தந்த பெருமையும் இவருக்கு உண்டு.

இவரது சமகாலத்தவர்களில் ராகுல் சாங்கிருத்தியாயன், ராங்கேய ராகவ், இலாசந்திரஜோஷி, சதுரசேன்சாஸ்திரி, குருதத்த முதலியவர்கள் குறிப்பிடத் தக்கவர்கள். கற்பனையையும் சரித்திரச் சான்றுகளையும் கலந்து, பெருமையைப் பறைசாற்றும் சரித்திர நாவல்களில், ராகுல் சாங்கிருத்தியாயனின் 'ஜய யௌதேய்', 'சிம்ம சேனபதி', யஷபாலின் 'திவ்யா' இலாசந்திர ஜோஷியின் 'பர்தேகீ ராணி; குருதத்தரின் 'விக்கிர மாதித்திய சாகஸாங்த' வாளமன், சதுரசேன சாஸ்திரியின் 'வைசாலிகீ நகரவதூ, முதலியன பிரபலமடைந்தவை, இலக்கியத்தரமானவை.

1950 முதல் 1970 வரையில் சரித்திர நாவல்களின் மவுசு குறையத் தொடங்கிய காலகட்டம். முற்போக்கு இலக்கியப் படைப்புகள் யதார்த்த வாதத்தின் துணையுடன் பெரும்இலக்கியமாகப் பரவியதால், கடந்தகாலக் கதைகளை உதாசீனப் படுத்தும் போக்கு மேலோங்கியது. இருந்தாலும், இக்காலகட்டத்தின் கவர்ச்சியான 'முற்போக்கு சமூகப்பிரச்னை' யின் அடிப்படையில், சில பிரபல இந்தி எழுத்தாளர்கள் சில சரித்திர நாவல் களையும் படைத்திருக்கிறார்கள். இவற்றில் பாராட்டத்தக்க நாவல்கள் ரிஷபசந்திர ஜைனின்'தில்லீ கா வியபிசார்', யாதவேந்தர் சர்மாவின் மகத விஜய், மல்ல மல்லிகா; ஷிவானிய ன் 'பைரவி; கிருஷ்ணகலீ; சத்தியகேது வித்யாலங்காரின் 'சேனானீ புஷ்யமித்ர, சாலிக்கிராம் மிச்ராவின் 'குஜ்ரா ஹோ கீ நகரவது, பகவத்சரண உபாத்யாயாவின் 'நூர்ஜஹாங்; இக்பால் பஹாதூரின் 'ஓர்ச்சா கீ நர்த்தகீ; ராங்கேய ராகவின் 'முர்தோங்கா டீலா சீவர்' 'மஹாயாத்ரா', நர்மதா பிரசாத் குப்தாவின் 'ஆல்ஹா' முதலியவை புகழ் பெற்றவை.

1970க்குப் பிறகு சரித்திர நாவல்கள் மிகக் குறைவாகவே வெளி வரலாயின. சரித்திர ஆராய்சி நூல்கள், கட்டுரைகள், அகழ்வராய்சித் தட யங்கள், மறைந்திருந்த வரலாற்று விவரங்கள் - இவைபற்றிய வாதப் பிரதிவாதங்கள் வாசகர்களின் பெரும் வரவேற்பைப் பெற்றன. இவை களுக்கு இருந்த கவர்ச்சி சரித்திர நாவல்களுக்கு ஏற்படவில்லை. சரித் திரத்தை உள்ளபடி (பெருமையோ, சிறுமையோ) எடுத்துக் காட்டுவதி லும், ஏற்றுக்கொள்வதிலும் யோக்கியப் பொறுப்பு இந்தி எழுத்தாளர்-வாசகர் இரு தரப்பாரிடமும் வளர்ந்து வந்தது.

1970க்குப் பிறகும் பல சரித்திர நாவல்கள் இலக்கிய சோதனைத் திறனுடன் வெளி வந்திருக்கின்றன. தற்காலத்திற்கு ஏற்ப புதிய கண்ணோட்டத்துடன் படைக்கப்பட்ட சரித்திர நாவல்கள் இலக்கிய மதிப்பைப் பெற்றன. இவைகளில் இக்பால் பஹாதுர் தேவஸரேயின் 'நாலந்தா', 'ஸுல்தான்-ஏ-மால்வா', ' நவாப் பேமுல்க் ', 'பேகம் 'ஹஜரத் மஹல்', 'ஜானே ஆலம்' முதலியவையும், குர்ரதுல் ஐன் ஹைதர் எழுதிய 'ஆக் கா தரியா' ('அக்னி நதி' என்ற தலைப்பில் தமிழில் வெளி வந்திருக்கிறது.') சிவசாகர் மிச்ராவின் 'ராஜதிலக்', 'மகத் கீ ஜய்'. ஜான் ஓ ஹிந்த் எழுதிய 'சுவர்ண துர்க', அவத் பிரசாத் வாஜ்பேயியின் 'தாராஷிகோஹ்', ஸலமா ஸித்திகியின் 'சிகந்தர் நாமா', காசிநாத் ஜைனின் 'சம்பக் சேட்', ராஜேந்திர அவஸ்தியின் 'ஜங்கல் கே பூல்'. ஜ்வாலா பிரசாத் கேசரின் 'பாஜீராவ் மஸ்தானி' விமல் அஹல்யா யனின் 'பாடலிபுத்ர கீ நர்தகி'. முதலியவை குறிப்பிடத்தக்கவை.

பிற மொழியைச் சேர்ந்த இந்தி எழுத்தாளர்கள் சிலரும் தம் பிர தேசத்து சரித்திரச் சான்றுகளை வைத்து நாவல்கள் எழுதியிருக்கிறார்கள். ரமேஷ் சௌத்திரியின் 'தன்யபிக்ஷு'. 'பாலசௌரி' ரெட்டியின் 'லகுமா' - இப்படிப் பல வெளி வந்திருக்கின்றன.

1980க்குப் பிறகு, சரித்திர நாவல்களின் வெளியீடு வெகுவாகக் குறைந்துவிட்டது. பழைய நூல்களின் புதிய பதிப்புகளும் வருவதில்லை. இலக்கியத் தரம் மிக்க சில நாவல்கள் மட்டும் அந்த ஆசிரியரின் மற்ற பெருமை-திறமைகளை நினைவில் வைத்து இன்றும் பாராட்டப்படுகின்றன.

'நிகழ்காலத்தையே சரியாகப் புரிந்துகொள்ள முடியவில்லையே இதற்கே நேரம் போதாத நிலையில், பழமையின் பெருமை பேச. அல்லது சிறுமை கண்டு வருத்தப்பட எங்கே நேரம்?......'

இந்த மனப் போக்கு இந்தி வாசகரிடையே பரவியிருக்கிறது.

प्रजानाम् प्रिय प्रतापी चक्रवर्ती

श्री राजराज चोलन्

तमिलनाडु जो दक्षिण भारत का इतिहास-प्रसिद्ध प्राचीन भूभाग है, तेरहवीं शती तक चेर, चोल, पाण्डिय, पल्लव वंशीय शासकों का सत्ताक्षेत्र रहा। अपने राज्य को साम्राज्य बनाना, करदाता सामंतों के राग-विराग पर सजग रहना, पराजित, प्रतिस्पर्धी पडोसी राजाओं के हमलों से चौकन्ना रहना और जीतना, साथ-साथ प्रजा के प्रिय हितकारी कार्यों को साधना—इत्यादि उस राजातंत्र के युग के अनुमोदित आचार-विचार थे। उन वैभवशाली, सुखभोगी अधिनायकों में से कुछ राजा-महाराजा ऐसे निकले थे, जो प्रजातंत्र के इस युग में भी सस्नेह स्मरणीय हैं, आदरणीय हैं, प्रशस्त हैं, और कुछ हद तक वर्तमान शासकों के लिए अनुकरणीय भी हैं।

देवानाम् प्रिय सम्राट अशोक, सम्राट चंद्रगुप्त, स्वाभिमानी पुरुषोत्तम, प्रतापी हर्षवर्धन, महाराजा भोज, बादशाह अकबर, चक्रवर्ती कृष्णदेवराय आदि शासकों के नाम उल्लेखनीय हैं। इन राजा-महाराजाओं ने अपने युग और व्यवस्था-परिस्थिति के अनुसार राजतंत्र के तमाम खरे-खोटे किये हैं, साथ ही सार्वजनीन सेवा, श्लाघ्य साधना के अलावा धर्म, कला, साहित्य और शिक्षा के क्षेत्रों में भी महत्वपूर्ण सेवाएँ की हैं। ऐसे ही एक आदरणीय, महान नरेश थे तमिलनाडु के लोकप्रिय, प्रजावत्सल चक्रवर्ती श्री राजराज चोलन्।

दसवीं और ग्यारहवीं शती में चोल राज्य को जो वर्तमान तमिलनाडु के तंजाऊर, तिरुच्चि, पुदुक्कोट्टै, चेंगलपेट, आर्काट जिलों

तक व्याप्त था, और विस्तृत करने का श्रेय श्री राजराज चोलन् को था। उनका साम्राज्य उत्तर में नर्मदा नदी तट और दक्षिण में उत्तरी लंका (सिंहल) तक फैला हुआ। उनके समय के पाण्डिय, चेर नरेश उनका प्रभुत्व माननेवाले करदाता सामंत थे। श्री राजराजन् का शासन्-काल ई. 985 से 1016 तक का था। लगभग तीस वर्ष की आयु में उन्होंने शासनाधिकार पाया। उनका जन्म आश्विन मास के शतभिषक् नक्षत्र के दिन हुआ था। वर्ष और तिथि का ठीक पता नहीं मिल रहा है। इन राजाओं के शासनकाल का ही ऐतिहासिक प्रमाण मिलते हैं। इन लोगों के द्‌वारा उत्कीर्ण किये गये शिलालेख, प्रशस्तिपत्र (तांबे के), इनके समकालीन कवियों द्‌वारा विरचित गाथागीत आदि से ऐतिहासिक प्रमाण मिलते हैं। शायद उस ज़माने में जन्मतिथि की अपेक्षा सिंहासनारूढ होने की तिलकोत्सव-तिथि को ही महत्वपूर्ण और परिगणनीय मानते थे। इसी विवरण से प्रारंभ कर प्रत्येक राजा-महाराजा अपनी 'मेय्कीर्ति' नामक प्रशस्तिगाथा रचवाया करते थे।

जन्म और विकास

चोलराज्य की राजधानी तंजाऊर थी। 'धान की खान' कहलानेवाला यह उर्वर प्रदेश कावेरी नदी के किनारे पर है। ई. 956 से 973 तक चोलराज्य का शासन करनेवाले परान्तकन्-द्‌वितीय (उपनाम—सुन्दर चोलन्) और इनकी महिषी वानवन् महादेवी की तीसरी संतान थे राजराज चोलन्। इनका बचपन का नाम अरुल्मोलि देवन् था। इनके बड़े भाई आदित्तन्-द्‌वितीय और बड़ी बहन कुन्तवै थे। इनके पिता सुन्दर चोलन् ने अपने सत्रह वर्षों के शासनकाल में चोलराज्य को विस्तृत किया ; कई देवमंदिर बनवाये, सुशासन की व्यवस्था की। इन्होंने अपने ज्येष्ठ पुत्र आदत्तिन् को

युवराज बनाकर शासन का दायित्व सौंपा। सुन्दर चोलन् के देहावसान के बाद, उनका भाई उत्तम चोलन् गद्दी पर बैठा। प्रजाजन चाहते थे कि चोलराजा का सिंहासन सुन्दर चोलन् के छोटे पुत्र अरुल्मोलि को ही मिले। राज्य में जनान्दोलन होने लगे। उत्तम चोलन् अयोग्य शासक होने के साथ, लालची, लोभी, प्रवंचक भी था। स्वयं तिलकधारण कर लेने के लिए उत्तराधिकारी युवराज आदित्तन् को धोखे से मरवा डाला। इसलिए प्रजाजन को उस सत्तालोभी के लिए राजगद्दी मिलना पसंद नहीं था। चोलराज्य के अभिभावक सामंत, दलपति, ग्रामनायक, वणिकवर्ग, अभिजात जन, सुशिक्षित बुद्धिजीवी आदि विशिष्ट लोग भी जन-आंदोलन के समर्थक थे।

अरुल्मोलि देवन नहीं चाहता था कि चोलराज्य में आन्तरिक कलह भडक उठे और शासनतंत्र दुर्बल पड जाए। उसने प्रजा-प्रमुखों, सामंतों और बन्धुजनों को समझाया और मनवाया कि चाचाजी शासक बनें, मैं उनके अधीन रहकर राज्यसेवा करूँगा।

तदनुसार अरुल्मोलि देवन विश्वस्त सहयोगी और सुदक्ष युवराज रहा। उस वीर युवराजा ने कई लडाइयाँ जीतकर चोल राज्य का विस्तार किया। शासन में कई सुधार लाकर प्रजा का मन मोह लिया। राज्य के सभी तबके के लोगों के साथ उसका स्नेहिल संपर्क था। चाचा उत्तम चोलन् के देहावसान के बाद, सन् 985 में अरुल्मोलि देवन का राजतिलक हुआ था, जो एक शानदार युग का प्रारंभ था। उस समय उसकी महारानी थी लोकमहादेवी जो एक सामंत नरेश की पुत्री थी।

राज्याभिषिक्त होने के उपरांत चोल महाराजा अरुल्मोलि देवन् अपने मन की महत्तर परिकल्पनाओं को साकार बनाने में कृतसंकल्प होकर जुट गया। वह प्रारंभ से ही बडा महत्वाकांक्षी, परिश्रमी,

प्रतिभाशाली वीर पुरुष था। शिक्षा-दीक्षा भी कम नहीं थी। सुशील, गुणग्राही, न्यायनिष्ठ और मानवतावादी था। इसलिए शीघ्र ही लोकप्रिय और सफल सुशासक बन गया। सबसे पहले अपने राज्य की शासन-व्यवस्था को सुदृढ और सुचारु बनाया। सभी तबके के लोगों को शिक्षा की सुविधा दिलायी। मातृभाषा तमिल की संवृद्धि और समादर पर पूरा ध्यान दिया। राज्य के नवयुवकों को चारित्रिक उद्बोधन के साथ अनिवार्य सैनिक शिक्षा और सामरिक प्रशिक्षण भी दिया। विशेषकर समुद्री सेना को सशक्त और सम्पन्न बनाया। कई युद्धपोत तैयार कराये। कलाकारों, कवियों, कारीगरों और विद्वानों का सम्मान किया। वह निष्ठावान शिवभक्त था; किन्तु इतर धर्मावलम्बियों के प्रति भी उदार स्नेहशील और सहायक रहा। इसीके शासनकाल में चोलराज्य विस्तृत होकर साम्राज्य का रूप धारण करने लगा। इसने अपने राज्य-विस्तार के लिए युद्ध से कम, स्नेहसंबंध से अधिक काम लिया।

प्रशासन की सुव्यवस्था

अरुल्मोलि देवन् बाद को श्री राजराज चोलन् के नाम से विख्यात हुए। 'राजराज' का अर्थ कुबेर भी होता है। राजराज चोलन् कुबेर के समान ऐश्वर्यसम्पन्न और कल्याणकारी होने के कारण यह नाम उनके लिए प्रशस्त हुआ।

श्री राजराजन् ने अपने राज्य के साथ-साथ अपने विजित प्रदेशों को भी कई भागों में विभाजित कर उन्हें नापवाया और चकबंदी, हदबंदी की सुव्यवस्था करायी। भूमिकर वसूलने की प्रक्रिया चालू की। भूमि को नापनेवाले उच्च पदाधिकारी का पद-नाम था 'उलकलन्दान् राजराज मारायन्', जमीन नापने के लिए उपयुक्त डंडे को 'उलकलन्द कोल' कहते थे। प्रशासन की सुविधा

के लिए कई जनपरिषदों की स्थापना की। 'तोट्ट वारियम्' (बाग-बागान परिषद), एरि वारियम् (जलाशय परिषद), संवत्सर वारियम् (शिक्षा, कला, धर्म, देवमंदिर आदि की परिषदें) आदि विख्यात थीं। प्रत्येक परिषद में समाज से ही लब्धप्रतिष्ठ, सुयोग्य सदस्य चुने जाते थे। घूँसखोर, धोखेबाज़, वेश्यागामी, चोर, हत्यारे आदि समाजिक अपराधियों को इन परिषदों में स्थान नहीं मिलता था। इस नियम में कहीं और कभी शिथिलता न बरती जाती थी। शासनतंत्र में सभी जाति-धर्मवालों को प्रतिनिधित्व दिया जाता था।

श्री राजराजन ने कई लडाइयाँ जीतीं। चेर और पांडिय राजाओं के साथ दो बार युद्ध किये, उनमें विजय पायी। तीसरी बार लंका नरेश का साथ लेकर दोनों पडोसी राजाओं ने चोल राज्य पर चढ़ाई की, उसको भी परास्त किया। राजराजन ने स्वयं जंगी बेंडा ले जाकर लंका पर चढ़ाई की। लंका के उत्तरी भाग को अपने कब्जे में लिया और वहाँ की राजधानी अनुराधपुरम् को नष्ट कर, पोलन्नरुवै नामक नगर को नयी राजधानी बनाया। राजराजन ने वहाँ अपने प्रतिनिधि नियुक्त कर अपने ढंग की शासन-व्यवस्था चलायी। राजराज चोलन् ने बाद को कर्नाटक के गंगपाडि, नुलम्बपाडि, तडिकैपाडि आदि प्रदेशों को जीतकर चोलराज्य का विस्तार किया। इन विजित प्रदेशों में वहाँ की जनता के कुशल-मंगल का पूरा दायित्व राजराजन् ने सुचारु रूप से निभाया।

चालुक्य राजाओं में आपसी फूट थी। ई. 992 में पश्चिम चालुक्य राजा तैलप ने चोलराज्य पर आक्रमण किया, किन्तु इसको पराजित होकर भारी नुकसान के साथ लौटना पडा। श्री राजराजन ने पूर्वी चालुक्य राजकुमार विमलादित्य से अपनी पुत्री कुन्तवै का विवाह कराया और दोनों राज्यों का स्नहेसंबंध सुदृढ किया। इस प्रकार

चढ़ाई या सुलह के राजतंत्र चलाकर अनेक छोटे-मोटे राज्यों को अपने चोल साम्राज्य के अंग बना लिये। उनकी अंतिम चढाई थी माल द्वीपों पर जो उनकी सशक्त नौ सेना के प्रताप से विजय पा सकी।

श्री राजराज चोलन् ने अपनी सामरिक और प्रशासनिक सफलताओं को प्रशस्ति-पत्रों के रूप में अंकित करवाया, जो आज भी ऐतिहासिक दस्तावेज़ हैं और ये तमिल भाषा में रचित हुए हैं। वे तमिलप्रेमी होने के साथ-साथ संस्कृतप्रेमी भी थे।

श्री राजराज चोलन् ने अपने शासनकाल के उन्नीसवें वर्ष में (ई. 1003) राजधानी तंजाऊर में एक भव्य, बृहद् शिवमंदिर का निर्माण प्रारंभ किया। यह पहले छोटा-सा शिवालय था। सात वर्ष तक हजारों कारीगरों के अविरत परिश्रम से यह बडा सुविशाल मंदिर पूरा हुआ। सन् 1009 में इस मंदिर का कुम्भाभिषक और उद्घाटन-महोत्सव सम्पन्न हुए। इसका नाम 'राजराजेश्वरम्' रखा गया। इसकी लम्बाई 793 फ़ीट और चौडाई 393 फ़ीट है। यह भव्य शिवमंदिर स्थापत्यकला और प्राचीन भवन-निर्माण प्रविधि का उत्तम नमूना है। विदेशी अभियंता, कलामर्मज्ञ विद्वानों ने इस विशाल और गंभीर मंदिर को अद्भुत स्थापत्य-साधना मानी है।

इस मंदिर में विराजमान भगवान शिवजी का नाम पेरुवुडैयार (बृहदीश्वर) और देवी पार्वती का नाम पेरियनायकी (बृहन्नायकी) है। इस सुविशाल मंदिर में विनायक, स्कन्ददेव, चण्डेश्वर, नटराज आदि देवताओं की सन्निधियाँ भी हैं। विशाल प्रवेश-मंडप पर बृहदाकार नंदी की मूर्ति है जो एक ही शिला की निर्मित बतायी जाती है। इस मंदिर के खंभों, भित्तियों पर सरस्वती, लक्ष्मी आदि देवी-देवताओं की शिल्प-मूर्तियाँ उत्कीर्ण हैं। यहाँ सुंदर रंगीन भित्तिचित्र भी हैं।

इस बृहद् मंदिर के तीन गगनचुंबी गोपुर द्वार हैं। मंदिर के भीतर कई मंडप हैं, शिल्पकला की भव्य प्रतिनिधि मूर्तियाँ सुंदर ढंग से खंभों, विमानों और मुँडेरों पर बनवायी गयी हैं। कलात्मक, सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम चलाने के लिए विशाल प्रेक्षागृह निर्मित हुए हैं। मंदिर के दैनिक पूजापाठ, विशेष उत्सव, पर्व-त्योहार अदि के लिए श्री राजराजन् ने कई गाँव देवस्व के रूप में समर्पित किये थे। प्रधान दैवी मूर्तियों के लिए उन्होंने 22.375 किलो स्वर्णाभरण, 1823.22 किलो स्वर्णपात्र, 222 किलो चाँदी के बर्तन उपहार में दिये। उनकी बडी बहन कुन्तवै-देवी ने अपनी तरफ़ से 446.806 किलो स्वर्णाभरण भेंट किये थे। इनके अलावा असंख्य स्वर्णमुद्राएँ दान-पुण्य के लिए प्रतिमास राजकोष से दिलाने की व्यवस्था कर रखी।

श्री राजराजन ने दैवी मूर्तियों के अलावा, महान शैवसंत अप्पर, सुन्दर, माणिक्कवाचकर, तिरुज्ञानसम्बन्धर—इन चारों की मूर्तियों को भी अपने बृहदीश्वर मंदिर में प्रतिष्ठित किया और उनके पूजा-पाठ चालू रखने की स्थायी व्यवस्था की।

श्री राजराज चोलन ने स्वयं शिवभक्त होते हुए, नागपट्टनम् के बौद्ध विहार के लिए आनैमंगलम् नामक गाँव को दान में दिया और उसी विहार के लिए अपने नाम पर 'राजराज पेरुम्पल्ली' नामक विशाल सभागार बनवाया। बेंगलूर के पास दो विष्णुमंदिर बनवाये जो स्थापत्य-कला के अद्भुत प्रतीक हैं। इस प्रकार कई उदाहरण मिलते हैं उनके सर्वधर्म-समभाव के।

वे बडे कलाप्रेमी थे। सैकडों नृत्यांगनाएँ, गायक-गायिकाएँ, वाद्यवादक और कलावंत लोग बृहदीश्वर मंदिर में नियुक्त थे। उनके लिए आर्थिक सहायता मंदिर के कोष से मिलती थी। 'श्री राजराज विजयम्' नामक संस्कृत नाटक और 'राजराजेश्वर नाटकम्' नामक

तमिल नाटक उत्सव के दिनों मंदिर के सभामंडप में प्रदर्शित किये जाते थे। इनमें प्रजावत्सल चक्रवर्ती राजराज चोलन् की सफलताओं की प्रस्तुति प्रमुख थी।

तमिल के सुप्रसिद्ध शैवसंत साहित्य तेवारम् के बडे प्रेमी होने के कारण श्री राजराजन ने लुप्तप्राय उन गीतों का संकलन कराया, उन्हें शिवमंदिरों में प्रतिदिन गाने की व्यवस्था करायी, 'ओदुवार' नामक तेवारम्-गायकों की नियुक्ति की गयी, उनको पर्याप्त आर्थिक सहायता देकर प्रोत्साहित किया गया। इसी प्रकार कवि, विद्वान, चित्रकार, कारीगर सबको सम्मानित और प्रोत्साहित करने का श्रेय श्री राजराज चोलन को है। उनका सुपुत्र राजेन्द्र चोलन भी प्रतापी, प्रभावी और लोकप्रिय चकवर्ती निकला जो महान पिता का महान सुपुत्र सिद्ध हुआ।

इस प्रजावत्सल, प्रतापी चक्रवर्ती के राजाभिषक तिलकोत्सव के एक हजार वर्ष पूरे होने की संस्मृति में गत वर्ष, सितम्बर 16 और 17 को तंजाऊर में तमिलनाडु सरकार ने भव्य महोत्सव का आयोजन किया। उसका उद्घाटन करने उस समय की प्रधान मंत्री श्रीमती इंदिरा गांधी पधारी हुई थीं। लोकप्रिय मुख्य मंत्री श्री एम. जी. रामचन्द्रन तथा उनके सहयोगियों ने इस महोत्सव को बडे पैमाने पर मनाया और भव्य, स्पृहणीय बनाया। इसकी स्मृति में तमिल विश्वविद्यालय की स्थापना उस ऐतिहासिक राजधानी तंजाऊर नगरी में की गयी है।

उल्लेखनीय है कि यह तमिल विश्वविद्यालय 'राजराजन्' के नाम पर हर साल सर्वोत्तम सृजनात्मक साहित्यकृति पर वरिष्ठ साहित्यकार को एक लाख एक रुपये की पुरस्कार राशि प्रदान कर रहा है।

मद्रास-600 017
दि. 15 मार्च 1985

आथर्स गिल्ड आफ़ इण्डिया की
मद्रास शाखा द्वारा प्रकाशित।
(प्रस्तुति: र. शौरिराजन)

contributors

1. **K. D. Thirunavakkarasu** M. A., PH. D. (53) Associate Professor of International Institute of Tamil studies, has got nearly 30 books to his credit, all in Tamil on subjects like historical studies, literary criticism, creative writing, translations, biographies and Anthologies. He has secured Franklincell Gold medal while studying in college and Sahitya Academy award. An authority on Raja Raja Chola.

2. **Naa. Parthasarathy** M. A., (52) editor "Deepam". has got more than 67 books to his credit books of poems, Short stories, novels, drama, & literary criticism. He has secured Sahitya Academy, Raja Sri Annamala. Chettiar awards Tamil Nadu State Govt. also has conferred its award. He is a widely travelled person in Europe and South Asian countries. An Executive Board member of the Central Sahitya Academy. His novels, and short stories have been translated, into English French and other Indian languages.

3. **Manavai Mustafa,** M. A. (50) editor "Courier" has got to his credit more than 16 books. Has translated from English to Tamil and from Malayalam to Tamil. Tamil Nadu Govt has conferred "Kalaimamani" title for his services in the field of Art & literature.

4. **A. Ranganathan** : A free lance journalist who is interested in Art criticism, Science writing and on general topics. He has written three books. He has won several prizes and awards including George Bernard Shaw medal, Prof. M. N. Saha Prize, for science writing, and New Jersey foundation prize for a monograph on the population problem in India.

5. **Dr. S. Padmanabhan,**, (50) Bank officer, graduated from Travancore University has got nearly fifty books in Tamil & English, to his credit. His main interest is temple art, and to unearth forgotten history of Kanyakumari District.

6. **A. V. Subramanian** (60) retired officer of Indian Railways a Scholar in Tamil, Sanskrit, & English. He has got forty books (Tamil 27, English 12 Sanskrit 1) to his credit. Special interest in aesthetics in Tamil and Sanskrit literature and verse translation in English of classical poetry.

7. **Smt Kala Tawker,** (46) M. A., B. T., Ph. D Professer of Tamil, Women's College. She has translated Gujerati short stories into Tamil and made in depth study of historical novels of Kalki and Kulapathi K. M. Munshi She has got two books to her credit, one a collection of Essays and another a novel.

8. **B. V. Srinivasacharyulu,** (64) M. A., a scholar in Telugu & Sanskrit. He has got five books to his credit. He has translated "Andal Thirupavai" & Best Tamil Prabanthas into Telgu verse form. He has been a lecturer in colleges and editor of magazines and books.

9. **Prof. K. Kushalappa Gowda** (53) M. A., Ph. D., Head of the Department Kannada, in Madras University. Has got eight books to his credit all in Kannada pertaing to history of Kannada language, its grammar and linguistics. A winne Karnataka Sahitya Academy Prize.

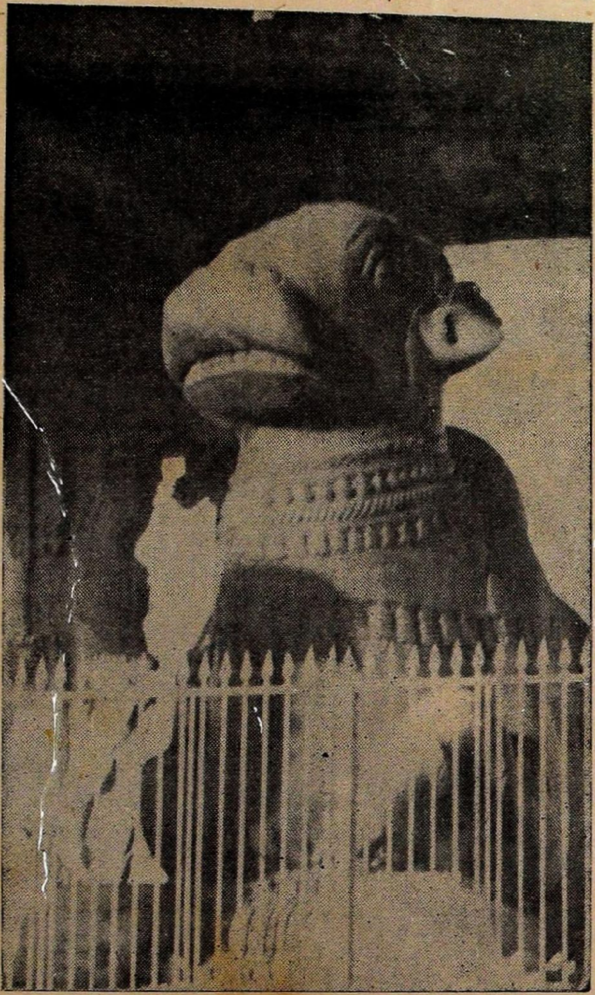
10. **R. Sourirajan** (56), M. A., a prolific writer in Hindi & Tamil. Has translated a number of Hindi & Malayalam works into Tamil and Tamil works into Hindi. He has got fifty books to his credit comprising Hindi & Tamil.

11. **Chandilyan :** (74) is the pen-name of Sri Bashyam who started his career as a Jounralist in Tamil Daily "Swadesamitran". As Chandilyan a writer of historical fiction is known throghout the length & breadth of Tamil country and even in far off countries where Tamils reside. He has got, more than sixty Novels to his credit. Some of them are highly priced and have seen number of editiors. He is one writer who writes simultaneously to half a dozen weeklies on differen historical periods. He has secured Bharatiya Basha Parishad award.

12. **Puthaneri R. Subramanyam (63)** Essentially a poet and an author of Twenty five lyrical dance dramas (Ballets) Recipient of Tamilnadu Govt's Poet Bharathi Dasan Award-1982 (cash award of Rupees Ten thousand plus a gold medal weighing four sovereigns) and Kalai Mamani award of State Sangetha Nataka Akademi

13. **Dr. S. Thiruvenkatachari (70)** Eminent educationist, Historian with more than two hundred research papers and a few books to his credit: a scholar both Tamil &Sanskrit; presently prof. Emeritus.

Printed at Aarthi Printing House, Madras-600 035. Ph.: 445762



WORLD FAMOUS "NANDI"
OF THE BIG TEMPLE — THANJAVUR